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Chances for Peace : An Editorial

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Cambodia on the Fence—*D. Gareth Porter*

Down at the Corner—*Saul Maloff*

Labor in the Bag—*Sidney Lens*

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NEWS AND VIEWS

A small, informal reception for Father Philip Berrigan at Marymount Manhattan in mid-December netted $1,251 in cash and $225 in pledges toward a defense fund, which friends are raising to defray expenses of his trial in Baltimore on charges arising out of pouring blood into draft files there as a protest against the Vietnam war. Court costs and defense expenses are expected to run around $2,500.

The Manhattan reception was co-sponsored by the Fellowship of Reconciliation and the Catholic Peace Fellowship—two organizations in one, it sometimes seems, but, two or one, high among the New York area's most respected peace groups.

FOR-CPF was (were) satisfied with the fund-raising results. And, though it is welcoming additional donations (Box 271, Nyack, N.Y., 10960), it is careful to allay any idea that, aside from acquittal or conviction, expenses are a major concern of those caught up, directly or indirectly, with the trial. Much more important, all are convinced, is that the trial achieve impact on the country, much as did the trial of Capt. Howard Levy last Spring, and much as will the trial of Capt. Dale Noyd, when court-martial proceedings against him (for refusing to train fighter pilots) reach the trial stage.

The Berrigan team hopes to achieve impact through a defense that frames motivation for the blood-spilling in the context of religious repugnance for the blood-letting in Vietnam. Catholic, Jewish and Protestant religious leaders will be called to testify to that end.

One problem may be getting the witnesses onto the stand. Government prosecutors are likely to enter objections on the basis on which they are called (they will not be character witnesses nor eye witnesses), and almost certainly they will object to certain lines of questioning. But Berrigan and his co-defendants will be in competent legal hands. Their attorney is Fred Weisgal, a Baltimore civil rights lawyer of wide experience.

Berrigan and his colleagues may need the best that Weisgal's counsel can provide, for the Government is not taking its part in the case casually. Strategy is being planned from Washington (by the Justice Department and Selective Service), even to such details as the scheduling of the trial.

Timing is important. Originally slated for early January, the trial is now off until perhaps February—which, of course, puts more distance between the trial and the emotions stirred by "Stop the Draft Week." The Government wants a conviction badly, but obviously prefers to get this quietly and with minimum upsetting of the peace community. Its caution may prove futile, however, as others are determined that the trial will be as dramatic as the action that brought it about—and as well publicized.

Incidentally, Father Berrigan is aware that his action—the pouring of blood—turned many people off, and provided some among the lukewarm and the faint of heart an excuse to cop out on the peace movement. But he has no apologies or regrets. He and his colleagues decided on blood as the element for their protest, since blood is the biblical symbol for life and because they wished, by the drawing of their blood, to dramatize the wasteful shedding of blood in Vietnam. They'd do it again, if only for the exorcising effect it had on them personally.

•

Points we wish the Pope had made in his disappointing "Day of Peace" appeal:

—"No one is free to evade his personal responsibility by leaving it to the government to make moral decisions. In war, citizens are asked by their government to go out and kill other men. The burden of showing that such an order is moral rests on the government that orders it" (John T. Richards in the November *Campus Call*).

—"Peace with justice will not come to Vietnam through military might, whether the war is escalated, as now a notch at a time, or whether, in frustration, [the U.S.] loose[s] Armageddon. A victory so won can only be sterile, bringing with it a host of new and intractable problems, and the promise of yet more hatred and violence" (American Friends Service Committee, in a paid ad in the Dec. 17 New York *Times*).

•

Senator Eugene McCarthy, in commenting to needling *America* editors on a letter from a Jesuit who went to Vietnam with a Yankee-go-home attitude and became converted to the holiness of U.S. presence:

"Missionaries are the worst sources. Nearly every historical document in the past by missionaries in the Far East has turned out under critical examination to be unreliable—nearly every one. They view situations in terms of what they are trying to do—their own conversions, the record they are making over there, the people they know. . ."

•

Civil rights groups in Pittsburgh are protesting U.S. Steel's new $8 million investment in South Africa on grounds that "such investment indirectly strengthens the position of the white minority who enslave 14 million non-whites under the apartheid system."

The protest is being directed not only at management, but also at the union, the United Steelworkers of America.

But no one is very hopeful. U.S. Steel's conscience, as exposed by its import quotas fight and its Birmingham policies, is inordinately selfish. And the union's civil rights consciousness is vastly overrated. (The union, for instance, refuses even to outlaw as meeting places Moose, Elks and Eagles Clubs with blatant discriminatory policies.)

The South African investment issue would seem an ideal opportunity for union president I. W. Abel to demonstrate, by his sensitivity to an international race question, his worthiness as a member of the President's National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders. But it will be surprising if it is not his position that South Africa is at the other end of the world.

JOHN DEEDY

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CORRESPONDENCE

JFK and Vietnam

New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: In William Pfaff's outstanding article, "The Liberals' War" (Dec. 15), there occurs the passage: "Lyndon Johnson's catastrophe [re Vietnam] came about because he believed these things and acted upon them in *virtually the only way left open* to him." In fact, however, there is clear evidence to show that other alternatives did exist and had indeed already been approached by President Kennedy.

On Nov. 15, 1963—one week before the assassination—U.S. Headquarters in Saigon announced that 1,000 of the 16,500 American "military advisors" then serving in Vietnam would be withdrawn, beginning December 3. This fact was published, for example, in a chronology of U.S. involvement in Vietnam, New York *Times*, Nov. 28, 1965. (According to an article by Ted Knap, *Washington Daily News*, Sept. 23, 1966, plans for withdrawing 1,300 men were announced two days before the assassination. It is not clear whether this represents a revision of, or an addition to, the earlier plan.)

At a public hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on April 25, 1966, Senator Wayne Morse stated that U.S. policies in Vietnam "would have been different" had Mr. Kennedy lived. Senator Morse recalled that he had visited the President about ten days before the assassination; when the talk turned to the Senator's criticism of the U.S. role in Vietnam, the President said he "wasn't sure but what I was right" and that he had the Vietnam situation under "intensive study." On Senator Morse's concern that the presence of U.S. "military advisors" would eventually lead to the sending of U.S. troops outright, Mr. Kennedy "indicated that was not his intention." This information can also be found in a UPI report published, e.g., *Washington Daily News*, April 25, 1966.

It is clear from the record that President Kennedy was undertaking a reap-

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CHANCES FOR PEACE

Long before President Johnson left for Australia or Pope Paul delivered his Christmas message, a number of magazines, *Commonweal* included, agreed to discuss the Vietnam war in their first January number. The purpose of such discussion is obvious: to bring to bear on the war as much critical intelligence and moral evaluation as possible. At this point such intellectual and moral scrutiny is obviously essential. What will now come, for example, of President Johnson's visit to Pope Paul and the Pope's call for peace without victory in the "dolorous and menacing" war in Vietnam? Unless it be some election-year political advantage for Lyndon Johnson, nothing, without that change of heart the Pope spoke of in his Christmas message shortly after the Johnson visit—a change of heart, it should be emphasized, among Americans as well as among Vietnamese, Southern and Northern.

The Administration has been laboring mightily to make the world accept its vision of reality, and the danger is that it may even have come to believe its own propaganda. The bombing of North Vietnam is a good case in point. President Johnson assured Pope Paul that we would cease bombing North Vietnam the minute we received definite indication that this move would be followed by peace talks. On previous occasions Administration spokesmen have made similar offers, saying that the United States would cease bombing as soon as North Vietnam de-escalated what the Administration calls its half of the war. On the surface this offer seems eminently fair. It goes down well with the American people, and it may even have deceived the Pope, although we are not so sure of this; it will not deceive the North Vietnamese, who have consistently denounced such suggestions as "perfidious reciprocity." To citizens of the United States President Johnson may sound very reasonable, but the North Vietnamese know what men like Roger Hilsman have been

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trying vainly to get across to the American people: until we began bombing the North, the war was being fought mainly by South Vietnamese—indeed, Mr. Hilsman insists that when we began the bombing there was no evidence at all that any North Vietnamese were present in the South. Not every expert totally agrees with this judgment of the former Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, but few argue that more than a regiment of North Vietnamese were in the South before our bombing began, and there is no doubt at all that the movement of troops from North to South has increased in direct relationship to our escalation of the bombing. For us to say, under these circumstances, that we will stop bombing only if the North Vietnamese stop infiltrating or give us "some other positive sign" is to insult the intelligence of the North Vietnamese.

The North Vietnamese have consistently made it clear that a halt to the bombing, without conditions, is the necessary prerequisite to negotiations, but we have refused to believe them; similarly, Secretary-General U Thant has solemnly assured us that such a bombing-halt was essential as the first step toward a UN-sponsored negotiation, but we have turned a deaf ear to him. Now the hour is late, and the hope that a bombing pause would be effective is not nearly as strong as it was six months ago. A precious opportunity has been passed by—again. Nonetheless, the United States should still take this essential step, halting the bombing immediately as the first move for de-escalation of the war and the beginning of negotiations for peace.

To match this step and make it effective, the United States will have to say clearly—which has never yet been done—that we are willing to negotiate directly with the National Liberation Front. This point, of course, has provided another classic example of Administration double-talk. Mr. Johnson and Mr. Rusk have always insisted that the United States was prepared to bargain without conditions; at the same time we have from the very first refused to bargain with the NLF, presumably because to do so might undermine the Johnson-Rusk insistence that the war is purely and simply a case of Northern aggression. Now the Administration at last seems to be changing its tune on the NLF, for domestic consumption at least, but the test of its sincerity will be its attitude toward the South Vietnamese regime on this point.

Before he went to Australia to meet President Johnson, General Thieu insisted that the South Vietnamese government would never talk with representatives of the NLF but only with individuals who defected; such talks, of course, would have absolutely no value as peace negotiations. Under pressure, the Thieu regime then said it was prepared to discuss relevant matters with any person associated with the NLF, but would never recognize the front as in any sense an independent political organization. When Mr. Johnson and General Thieu got together in Australia, this still insufficient improvement was then said to represent the views both of Mr. Johnson and of General Thieu, and the matter was dropped. But if the United States is serious about bringing the war to a halt, the Johnson Administration should not leave the issue in this unsatisfactory state; if there is to be any hope of peace, the South Vietnamese government must be prepared to negotiate seriously with the representatives of the National Liberation Front as well as Hanoi.

However, if far-reaching changes are needed in the attitude of the government of South Vietnam toward negotiations, equally drastic changes are needed here at home. For example, General Earle Wheeler, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said recently: "Negotiation is not a face-saving device for abandoning the objectives we have been fighting for. It is a method for achieving our objectives." And General Wheeler went on to say that the Communists could end the fighting any time they wanted to, and "if negotiations would make it easier for them to cease their aggression, we would be happy to oblige." In other words, the chairman of our Joint Chiefs sees negotiations not as an effort at compromise and settlement but simply as a means by which we can accept the unconditional surrender of our opponents. As Tom Wicker of the N.Y. *Times* put it, "General Wheeler's remarks thus tend to confirm what many here believe—that the Johnson Administration now is committed to the military defeat of the Communists in Vietnam and is not seeking a compromise solution."

This, we fear, is the sad truth of the matter. Tragically, the Johnson-Rusk team has escalated so often that in their view the U.S. must now "win" in order to justify the terrible price we have already paid. In this situation it is easy to say that somehow the Administration must be brought to see reason, by way of outside pressure if not by inner conviction, and this before it undertakes "hot pursuit" into Cambodia, raids on Chinese airfields or any of the other forms of dangerous escalation that are being so strongly rumored in Washington. Yet how is this to be done? How much prospect is there for such a change of direction, if not of heart? We would be less than honest, and less than realistic, if we said we thought the immediate prospects were bright, but some small signs of hope can be detected. First of all, the moral outcry against the war grows every day, and this is heartening. Secondly, the candidacy of the talented and capable Senator McCarthy and the still weak rating of Mr. Johnson in the polls could conceivably force a reappraisal inside the Democratic Party. Thirdly, GOP leader Everett Dirksen, long an LBJ fellow-traveler, recently broke step to suggest that a Republican president might be better able to end the war than the Democratic incumbent. Admittedly, each of these three factors is slight, and even all together will not bear too much weight. Nonetheless, we welcome them, for if they offer no hope of change in our course in Asia, talk of peace may be even more a mockery next Christmas than it was this year.

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SAME OLD ROME

The book has been closed on the Elko case, with the story as confused and the public as uninformed today as a year ago. The principal—Bishop Nicholas Elko of the Byzantine Rite Diocese of Pittsburgh—has "resigned" his see and been "promoted" to a titular archbishopric; a new bishop has been named to Pittsburgh; and priests and people have pretty much been told that the affair is none of their business. "The matter was between Bishop Elko and the Holy See," the administrator of the diocese said. "Everything that happened happened in Rome."

But, of course, everything that happened did *not* happen in Rome; it happened also in a diocese that stretches from Western Pennsylvania to Alaska and California. And if the affirmations of Vatican II regarding rights to information mean anything, the "matter" concerned not only Bishop Elko and the Holy See, but the diocese's 220,000 members and those of other rites and denominations whose interests include Byzantine Catholicism.

Yet all anyone received by way of information was a simple announcement that offered neither reason nor explanation for the deposition of Bishop Elko. Not surprisingly, Rome's historic reticence to share information opened new doors of confusion. The Associated Press reported that the charges against Bishop Elko resulted from "his attempts to liberalize the traditions of the Eastern Rite church"; Religious News Service said he was "too slow in implementing Vatican II reforms and . . . interfered with academic freedom at the diocesan seminary."

It would have been instructive from several points of view if the liberal-conservative issues had been sorted out and discussed publicly, and this could have been done without violating legitimate considerations of discretion and privacy. Instead, the case was handled in typical Roman fashion: in secret and seemingly contemptuous of the Church's own preachments about the right of Catholics to information about their Church and the duty of those in authority to see that information is made available.

The Elko case provided a good opportunity for Rome to demonstrate that the Church is in fact the whole People of God, a family amongst whom not just joys and triumphs are to be shared, but worries and embarrassments as well. Failure to seize the opportunity is yet another indication that on high the Church continues to be regarded as some kind of private episcopal club.

BENCHMARKS

In *Privacy and Freedom,* a rather horrific account of contemporary incursions on individual privacy and growing police abuse, author Alan Westin describes many of the technical devices currently in wide use. These include directional microphones which enable the listener to overhear conversations from over 600 feet away, complicated radar disguised as an automobile spotlight which can zoom in on voices from over a mile away, bugging "darts" shot from rifles and able to transmit unseen, contact microphones and similar devices that send shivers up the spine of the citizen anxious about the erosion of civil liberties. The common feature of all these gadgets is that they don't involve physical trespass and so, presumably, in some measure avoid unwarranted "search and seizure." Consequently, a heated controversy about what constitutes unlawful intrusion has developed, with police arguing for the necessity of this sort of eavesdropping and civil libertarians for the necessity of protection from them.

With the Fourth Amendment as the focal point for the debate, the Supreme Court has held in the *Katz* decision that police agencies cannot use bugging devices without having obtained a search warrant from a judge. Widely hailed as a step toward further regulation and eventual proscription of these procedures, the Court's decision in effect sanctions their use by making permissible encroachments which no court order can make justifiable. Fred Graham, reporting for the New York *Times,* concluded that "at least the Supreme Court's attitude gives society the opportunity to see if it can trust itself to use its new technology," implying, quite correctly, that the Court had abandoned the effort to guard constitutional liberties from Mr. Westin's miasma of devices, and in effect had abdicated its role as buffer and guardian of the Bill of Rights in a state armed with its technological arsenal.

Almost simultaneously, however, the Washington, D.C. Court of Appeals upheld the freedom to travel, extending those recent decisions that have been whittling away at the State Department's proclivity to rule certain Communist countries "off-limits" to American travelers. Writing in a peculiarly circuitous turn of phrase, the Court ruled that although the State Department did have "authority to control the lawful travel of the passport," it could not exercise the same control on the bearer of the passport who now is presumably free to go where he will so long as he leaves his passport behind. Regrettably, the Administration has decided to fight this ruling by appealing to Congress to enact a law making proscribed travel a federal crime, a decision Congress eschewed in 1958 and again in 1966. In light of the uproar over globe-trotters like Staughton Lynd and Stokely Carmichael, the inclination may be to attempt to clamp down on peripatetic leftists, and let the Court handle the constitutionality.

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The White House Aborts the Riots Commission

Lyndon Johnson's two-pronged response to the disorders of last summer involved establishing a Riots Commission and calling for a day of prayer. While it would be

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premature to evaluate the success of the latter device, the former has not worked out as anticipated.

On Dec. 14, it was suddenly announced that the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders was advancing the date of its final report from July to March, and that most of the staff would no longer be retained, since its investigations had been completed. The explanations offered to the surprised staffers, who had expected to stay until June, also included mention of budgetary problems. (The Commission budget is about $150,000 a month.)

Despite official explanations, it is no secret that the Commission has been hastily scrapped because the conclusions of the field-level investigators were becoming increasingly incompatible with political realities as viewed from the White House. The younger staff wrote reports placing heavy blame on local police, criticizing the adminstration of federal programs and the magnitude of resources currently allotted to urban housing, jobs, welfare, education and poverty programs as totally inadequate.

High-level staff, aware of the political exigencies involved, tended to squelch these reports. Summaries reaching the 11 members of the Commission were heavily excerpted. As time passed, the split in the Commission grew wider, until the generally accepted proposition that the final report should be issued well before next summer provided the excuse for dismissing the staff early. The Commissioners, most of whom favored advancing the timetable, were totally unaware of the decision to give the staff notice.

Given the political temper of the Congress, the dilemma of the White House was understandable. By establishing a blue-ribbon commission, a President almost irrevocably commits himself to its findings, without knowing in advance what they will be. In this case, the result was also to set up a prestigious lobby within the Administration for programs and approaches that Lyndon Johnson had no intention of carrying out.

The staff was given initial instructions to "build upon existing programs," and not to expect increased expenditures. There was also mention of "platform material."

Field-level staff members soon became convinced that it would be pointless even to continue their investigations without the assumption of minimal additional expenditures in the area of $4 billion annually. They made this clear to the senior staff in a confrontation in early December. Faced with what one close observer termed a "classic runaway commission," the senior staff, in consultation with the White House, decided simply to abort the panel entirely.

All but 21 of the Commission's nearly 100 professional staff will be dismissed by the end of January. What was to be an interim report will be slightly expanded and issued as a final report. Staff work planned to evaluate in depth the findings of the investigators is canceled. Expansion of the rather sketchy studies of the "city teams" has been left hanging. And the formulation of long-range proposals, a prospect which undoubtedly gave the White House even greater nightmares, has been turned over to a new panel of experts, reportedly under former Budget Director Kermit Gordon, which if not inspired, will be safe.

All of this would fit neatly and unremarkably into the familiar picture of the Administration's almost total unresponsiveness to the revolution in the cities, except that the Commission was the one locus within the Administration capable of generating the urgency that has been so lacking. It was precisely this that rendered it politically beyond the pale. The McClellan Committee, though it looked hard, did not find a conspiracy, nor did the House Committee on Un-American Activities. Instead, a responsible panel of professionals came to inescapable conclusions: that more money had to be spent; that police are often sadistic, and more the perpetrators of lawlessness than law; that racism runs deep in America; that efforts must be basic and massive. All of this was promptly ruled out of court.

What renders such proposals out of the question? Try as one may to distinguish Johnson the domestic liberal from Johnson the warhawk, it invariably comes back to the War. One must agree with Walter Lippmann's astute comment that no society is capable of waging two great crusades at the same time, and Lyndon Johnson's prime crusade is in Southeast Asia, even if his empire begins to crumble from within. There is simply no sense of urgency, no commitment to respond to the urban crisis, because of the preoccupation with war. The wreckage strewn by the 90th Congress was at least as much the fault of the leadership vacuum as of the loss of 47 Democrats in the House.

It is not even necessary to weigh the question in terms of intangibles like leadership or crusade-waging. The budgetary figures tell the story. War expenditures have squeezed domestic spending into a second-priority corner. While Wilbur Mills is speaking of further budget cuts of five billion, any talk of doubling expenditures to fight poverty is a pipe dream. Spiritually or fiscally, the war comes first.

And the aborting of a Commission, which was politically out of tune with the times because it recognized the enormity of the task, is an ominous reflection of the war's toll. The demise of the Commission on Civil Disorders scarcely made the papers.

Faced with worsening ghetto conditions and the prospect of another summer of uprisings, the nation is thus left with prayer, which can hardly be claimed as a Great Society innovation. Before Lyndon Johnson comes to depend too heavily on this nostrum, he should be aware of precedents. The last time urban renewal was left to the good Lord was at Sodom and Gomorrah.

ERNEST GARVEY

(Ernest Garvey is the pseudonym of a Congressional legislative assistant.)

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The Family Farmer Fights Back

Twelve thousand farmers gathered in Louisville at the National Farmers Organization convention in early December, seeking not merely an improvement in farm conditions, but to save their way of life. Last year alone, 200,000 small farmers went out of business, capping off a trend that began with the end of World War II. As Don Bartoto, a farmer from Lorain County, Ohio, put it, "I've invested 35 years and $60,000 in this farm, but how can I ask my son to take it over when he could make more just letting the cash sit in the bank." A farmer from Wisconsin complained, "We barely made enough last year to pay our taxes." An Ohio farm-woman answered wryly, "Musta been a good year."

Two causes are normally cited for the decline of the small family farm: technology and overproduction. The contradiction inherent in the juxtaposition of these two terms has escaped those who view the death of the small farm as a sad but necessary step in the evolution of modern capitalism. If the farmer is making inefficient use of modern production techniques, how can he be overproducing? The fact is that the revolution in farm technology has been a tremendous boon to the small farmer. Through machine co-ops and credit unions he can derive the benefits of the newest developments in farm machinery, while only paying a fraction of the cost, and that over a number of years. Since he does not normally have to hire farm labor, his overhead costs are much lower than the vast commercial enterprises that are hailed as the wave of the future.

The cry of overproduction is a similar shibboleth. The cause of the farm crisis is simply low farm prices. This results not from an overabundance of goods but from the lack of marketing power of the small farmer. His impotence in the face of fluctuating market prices is unique in the American economy. Manufacturers exercise control over their pricing structures; workers bargain collectively with management to achieve a living wage. Only the farmer is expected to just bring his goods to market and take what he can get.

In the face of this disadvantage, the NFO has decided to borrow the technique of collective bargaining from labor. The theme of this year's convention was, "No Price—No Production." The NFO farmers will not bring their goods to market until a price has been agreed upon between their agents and the processors. Their ultimate goal is master contracts for each crop, to be negotiated yearly. Their weapon is the holding action. If their terms are not met, they will withhold their goods from the market indefinitely, dumping their milk and letting their corn grow to seed, if necessary. Although the holding action resembles a strike, it is much more costly to the farmer than a strike is to the worker. A farmer loses both the profits normally obtained from his crop and the investment in terms of time, feed, overhead and fertilizer that went into producing the crop. The most eloquent sign of the small farmers' desperation was their overwhelming and enthusiastic willingness to vote for a holding action in grain (to be held within 40 days), with actions in other commodities soon to follow.

At this year's convention, the NFO began to come to grips with two vital issues which it had previously skirted: commodity parity and political action. Differential pricing patterns in the three major commodity areas (dairy, livestock and grain) have long been a stumbling block to collective action in agriculture. A rise in meat prices normally results in the conversion of dairy farms to livestock, thus driving the price of meat back down. To prevent such cutthroat competiton between farmers, the NFO has decided to stress parallel price improvements in all commodity areas.

From its inception, NFO has defined itself as a non-partisan organization. It counts numerous Republicans and Democrats within its ranks and feels it can ill afford to lose participants in collective bargaining by assuming a partisan stance. Despite this non-partisan veneer, it is coming to recognize the need for, and the benefits to be derived from, political activity. When NFO held its first major holding action—on milk last spring—the Justice Department responded by issuing an injunction charging disruption of interstate commerce under the Cooper-Volstead Act. This injunction succeeded in sharply curtailing the holding action and limiting its success to temporary rises in dairy prices, but no contracts. NFO greeted this injunction with cries of "Dump milk and LBJ too!" Oren Lee Staley, NFO president, made it clear that the NFO vote was a bloc up for grabs and that it would not support candidates who advocated policies inimicable to the farmer's interest. The message was not lost in Washington. Prosecutions of NFO for violating the injunction have been dropped with assurances that as long as the government is informed 24 hours previous to a holding action, no injunctions will be issued. Vice President Humphrey, speaking at the NFO convention, pledged the Administration's support. H. R. Cummings, Huron County, Ohio, NFO chairman said, approvingly: "Humphrey talked farm talk; he talked NFO."

Why care about the decline of the family farm and NFO's fight to save it? In a nation that claims to value pluralism, rural America is coming increasingly under the economic and political domination of a strange congeries of commercial enterprises and of a single-interest group: the large food processors and the American Farm Bureau Federation, the latter, a huge "farm" organization whose membership is only 40 percent farmer and which is controlled by the processors. This combine is anxious to see farmers sell out cheaply so that the proces-

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sors can make further inroads into the farming end of food production, thereby improving their monopolistic position. Unless the devastating economic power of the processors is recognized, one is hard put to explain the fact that since World War II, while prices for all farm goods have dropped precipitously and millions of farmers have been forced off the farm, the price of processed foods has risen sharply. Somehow the neat supply-and-demand curves which are the heart and soul of a free market economy are not operating, and both the farmer and the consumer are being hurt.

To quicken the pace of farm removal, the Farm Bureau proposed that its lobbyists work to abolish all forms of government support for farmers. This tax exempt organization has also called for escalation of the Vietnam war and subsidizes, to the tune of hundreds of thousands of dollars a year, a whole series of right-wing youth seminars and radio programs. Although the NFO is still maintaining a public image of fraternal brotherhood with all farm organizations, a clash with the Farm Bureau is imminent. NFO adopted resolutions calling for support of existing programs of Government price supports and advocated other government programs to increase farm income. It also called for investigation of the concentration of power in the food industry by all power available. This call presumably includes support for the exposé of the Farm Bureau conducted by N.Y. Congressman Resnick.

The NFO, fighting to preserve a way of life, is quickly realizing that this fight will involve an assault on the whole structure of rural poverty, a structure that turns farmers into sharecroppers, sharecroppers into migrants; a structure that has forced millions of rural Americans to flock to the slums of already overcrowded cities in search of employment that isn't there, a structure that has placed control of the nation's food production in the hands of a very few. President Johnson's Commission on Rural Poverty has recently produced an eloquent document outlining the plight of America's 14 million rural poor. The NFO remains the only large organized group in America, including the U.S. Government, prepared to meet this problem with action, not words. MARC LANDY

(*Marc Landy, a senior at Oberlin College, is Associate Editor of* The Activist.)

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LABOR IN THE BAG

THE MEANY-JOHNSON ROMANCE

George Meany was like the cat who swallowed the canary at the recent AFL-CIO convention in Bal Harbour, Florida. Indeed he had. The only man who could challenge him for the leadership of American labor, Walter Reuther, was absent from the festivities not because he was busy negotiating contracts with auto magnates but because in pre-convention soundings he had failed to mobilize support for his position. The few dozen peaceniks in the assemblage of 1,000 could be mercilessly twitted by Meany because acre for acre there were more blatant hawks and fellow-travelers of the CIA here than in a Chamber of Commerce convention. Finally, Meany had in his vest pocket that priceless commodity, sure to consolidate support, Lyndon Baines Johnson.

The President now calls George "Mr. Labor" and George, at the convention, effusively reminded the President that "we support you and we urge you to carry on." Both men have a certain need for each other, not a life and death need in which neither can survive without the other's support, but one of those realpolitik needs in which there is considerable mutual advantage to alliance. With virtually all the liberals in Congress and the ADA having deserted him on the Vietnam issue, Johnson painfully needs a liberal aura, and from the sanctuary of the house of labor with its great struggles for freedom Meany can give it to him.

Meany also needs a little glue right now to keep his house together. In 1968, probably in March, Walter Reuther will take the one and a half million UAW members out of the AFL-CIO; there no longer is any hope for reconciliation. If the President of the United States were neutral in the intramural labor struggle, Reuther would have a 50-50 chance of pulling along with him I. W. Abel's big steelworkers' union, as well as a few other former CIO affiliates. The UAW, after all, played a role in helping Abel topple David McDonald from the presidency of the steel union a few years ago and has been on far better terms with him than with his predecessor. But the steelworkers will soon be negotiating for a new collective bargaining agreement, and such is the overcapacity of the steel industry these days, in preparation for a strike, that it can stockpile at least a three-to-five-month supply. In such circumstances, the steel union would have to be on the picket line for a long, long time before it began to hurt management—unless the President of the United States were to use his enormous power to mediate the dispute. Abel, then, is not likely to pull out of the AFL-CIO so long as George Meany has the closest telephone to the White House.

If Kennedy were alive the situation would be reversed, but as things stand, Walter Reuther is destined to be a lonely man for some time to come. Many unions are beholden to him for exemplary support in their critical hours—notably the rubber workers, the teachers, and

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Cesar Chavez' agricultural union—but none of them is likely to leave the AFL-CIO with him, because with Lyndon Johnson on his side Meany wields the kind of weapon that can make or break union leaders with less strength than Walter P. Reuther.

It is not surprising, then, that Meany felt his oats at the 7th constitutional convention. Reuther had urged that the executive committee of six, half former CIO and half former AFL, which was supposed to be an interim policy-making body, be revived. Meany abolished it entirely. Reuther wanted the flagrant anti-Communism of Meany's international affairs director, Jay Lovestone, toned down. Meany raised the volume. He taunted the 523 participants at the Chicago labor conference against the Vietnam war as having been called together on the orders of "Hanoi," derogated them as a tiny minority of one-sixth of one percent of the labor leadership, even though they included such men as Frank Rosenblum, Pat Gorman, Emil Mazey and dozens of international vice-presidents, and charged that the resolution they adopted had been published by the Communist paper, *The Worker*, two weeks before "the meeting took place."

Reuther wanted a new show of dynamism and had an elaborate plan for an organizing drive; Meany simply boasted that the federation had gained 1.8 million members since 1962-63 (although it now represents a smaller portion of the nation's labor force than it did at birth in December 1955). Reuther wanted an accelerated offensive on racial discrimination in labor's ranks; Meany was content to sit on the tokenist *status quo*, and the convention, heavily-weighted with construction unions, was content to sit with him.

This 7th constitutional convention was, in a sense, a punctuation point in labor history. A group of middle-of-the-road unions, spiced with rank and file radicals, broke away from the AFL in 1935 to form the CIO. Many people then thought, especially after the 1937 sit-down strikes, that the CIO would drive the AFL out of business just as the AFL had driven the Knights of Labor out of business in the 1890's. But the AFL revived, in considerable measure because Franklin Roosevelt and Sidney Hillman buttressed the conservative construction unions and because many AFL unions signed sweetheart contracts with employers to bypass the more militant CIO. By 1955, although the whole labor movement had grown six times larger than what it was at its nadir in the 1930's, the CIO was still only slightly more than half the size of its rival, and was rent with serious internal squabbles. The merger in 1955 was in part a shotgun marriage because McDonald and the steel union threatened to bolt the CIO unless unification were accomplished.

Reuther convinced himself in that distant day twelve years ago that merger could be used to undercut business unionism and make social unionism, his brand, predominant. He expected as a minimum that many millions of new workers would be organized, and he assigned one of his vice-presidents, Jack Livingston, to head a new organizing committee for the hyphenated AFL-CIO. He also expected that the influence of Jay Lovestone, the former Communist Party secretary who is today the closest ally of the CIA, would be whittled away, and that real progress could be made on the race issue. None of this has come to pass. The recent organizing gains are the result of a burgeoning in the war industry and Jack Kennedy's order some years ago granting recognition to labor unions in the government field. Lovestone is today more entrenched than ever, and while a small advance has been made toward eliminating racial discrimination, it shows no promise of moving beyond tokenism.

With the help of Lyndon Johnson, business unionism is back in the saddle, triumphant, self-assured, and so wedded to the *status quo* that most of today's youth consider it part of the establishment. The image of labor as a great force for social change, so poignant in the 1930's, is gone. The present generation can still become excited about Cesar Chavez and Albert Shanker, but for the rest they see little difference between Meany and the president of the National Association of Manufacturers.

In 1956 I published an article in the *Harvard Business Review* pointing out—to the discomfiture of many of my CIO friends—that unity was no panacea, that labor has often made its greatest gains as a result of schism, e.g., when the AFL broke with Knights in 1886 or when the CIO broke with the AFL in 1935. The projected split between the auto union and the AFL-CIO, I'm convinced, will not be a setback for labor, but a small ray of hope that something of its idealistic élan can be revived.

SIDNEY LENS

(Sidney Lens is an editor of Liberation *magazine and author of* Radicalism in America [*Crowell*].)

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NATIONAL AFFAIRS

POSTSCRIPT TO A LETTER

In "Letter From An Editor" (Dec. 15), Peter Steinfels writes a rejoinder to my article which argued that there is still time for Americans to decide through normal political ways a new national policy on Vietnam.

While reading Mr. Steinfels, I had the odd experience of agreeing with most of his points even though he was writing in rebuttal to myself. I could agree because I could see the ideals and objectives for which he was argu-

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ing, and I share them. I am all in favor of racial equality, a more just and rational economic order, a peaceful world, and the other aspirations which provide the points of reference in his argument.

Our disagreement is the traditional disagreement between a liberal and a radical. It is an argument that cannot be reconciled because it is basically a difference in temperament.

Near the end of his article, Mr. Steinfels writes: "I do not think, then, that it is so helpful to think of Vietnam (or racism, or economic imperialism) as one issue and the 'character of the national debate and the forms which dissent takes' as another and 'more important' issue. They are part and parcel of the same issue—will there be freedom and justice at home and abroad?—and they will be resolved together or not at all."

This all-or-nothing stance is the natural posture of a radical. As a liberal, I do not find it congenial. The course of history and one's own human experience suggest that problems of freedom and justice are never solved once and for all or across the board. We work away at them, making headway with some and no headway with others and, sometimes, inadvertently creating new problems in the course of solving old ones.

Now some people find it boring to fuss about with specific issues like "stopping the supersonic transport, preserving the redwoods, and reforming the Ways and Means Committee" when they know perfectly well that what is needed is a revolutionary change that would transcend such issues and make them irrelevant. But other people, like myself, find it equally frustrating to clamor for a revolutionary change when none is likely and when no leader or party is in sight that one would trust with revolutionary power. We Americans do not live in utopia but neither are we in a country in a pre-revolutionary stage. We live in a rich, technologically successful, socially rather conservative society. A great majority of Americans regard this country as a success story. They do not want a revolution and will not tolerate any minority, black or white, that tries to accomplish change by violence. Since we have a heritage of law and of effective political discourse, it seems reasonable to try to influence one's fellow citizens along a constructive course by persuasion and politics. But I can well understand that to Mr. Steinfels all this expresses complacency and an acceptance of discreet elitism. I can only say that to me it seems liberal and practical.

Meanwhile, in the world of practical politics, Senator Eugene McCarthy's decision to campaign against President Johnson's policies in the primaries has provided peace Democrats for the first time with a focus for their energies. His campaign is off to a shaky start. Money is not flowing in although doubtless a substantial sum could be raised if the right people were put to work at it. Even when a cause is popular, money-raising is hard work.

In his initial appearances, Senator McCarthy has not proved an exciting speaker. His thrilling address in behalf of Adlai Stevenson's nomination at the 1960 Democratic Convention was actually an exceptional rather than a characteristic performance on his part. His normal style is low-keyed and features oblique thrusts and gentle humor. ("Let's consider an imaginary country . . . like Red China.") But having occasionally fired up audiences in the past, he can presumably do so again if he decides it is really necessary.

For the present, his quiet approach may actually be better. The partisans in his audiences are with him anyway, whether he gives them anything to applaud or not. Since he is fighting for ideas rather than for a personal victory, it is more fitting for him to discuss those ideas in reasoned tones rather than strike a false note of drama and arouse unfounded hopes. He is not going to block President Johnson's renomination no matter how many primaries he wins, and it would be idle for him to pretend otherwise.

A calm approach may enable him to reach the millions of voters who are now uncertain, voters who are eager to support the war and what they feel is the patriotic cause but who are troubled about many aspects of the war and who are unconfident about President Johnson's leadership. A shrill, self-righteous, or indignant speech might put off such voters. There is at least the possibility that Senator McCarthy's reasonableness may persuade them. If it does, he will make a strong showing in the primaries. This, in turn, although it will not alter the course of events in his own party, may have significant effects among the Republicans.

The Republican Party is only beginning the process of making up its mind on the war. There are numerous signs that many Republicans, for reasons of political opportunism if not of conviction, would like to shift away from the hard line on the war laid down by Senator Dirksen and Richard Nixon. Senator Charles Percy, who hopes to benefit from a deadlock, is making dove-like noises, while Governor Nelson Rockefeller, the chief hope of the moderates, has discreetly moved from his active pro-Administration position of two years ago to one of deep silence. Even Nixon himself is capable of shifting his views if he thinks the peace sentiment is beginning to prevail.

As is usual in politics, moral ends are not being pursued directly but instead through a maze of artifice, ambition and calculation. The strength of Senator McCarthy's showing will be yet another factor taken into account by the Republicans. The cause of the peace Republicans might be advanced if General James M. Gavin were to enter the New Hampshire primary against Messrs. Nixon and Romney. As they proved in 1964 when they voted for the absent Henry Cabot Lodge, New Hampshire Republicans are sufficiently volatile to vote for a political outsider. WILLIAM V. SHANNON

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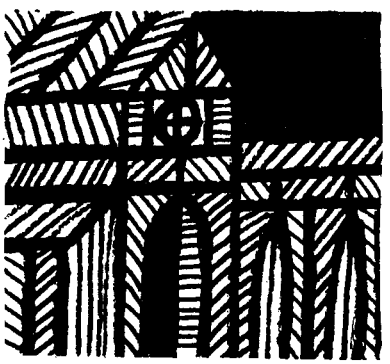
SEX AND THE CHRISTIAN

The erotic and the Scriptures

JOSEPH BLENKINSOPP



To explore the possibilities of a Christian theological understanding of the erotic would seem an unrewarding task. From end to end the New Testament displays an atmosphere of acute eschatological crisis; it is reticent on the expansive possibilities of human life as such. Jesus was celibate and so, it appears, was Paul. There is far more about the creative possibilities of sexual abstention than about the creative (not just procreative) possibilities of the man-woman relationship.

True, as time went on and the Lord did not return as expected, we find an increasing depth of focus on this and other aspects of bodily existence. But by then a pervasive anthropological dualism had begun to complicate the whole question of thinking positively of life in the body. The point hardly requires to be labored that these have been the terms in which, until very recently, most Christian teaching on sex has been formulated; suffice it to think of Augustine's distinction between the *ratio superior* in which, as he logically remarks, there is no sex, and the *ratio inferior*, or Hugh of St. Victor's dichotomy between marital and carnal union, only the former of which has any real spiritual value.

There can be little doubt that the Christian failure (whether we think of it as real or only apparent) to grasp this particular nettle is very often the basic reason for the rejection of the Christian offer as a whole. This is perhaps verified most clearly with respect to the creative artist whose temperament makes him most sensitive to the possibilities of life in the body—think of Yeats or Camus or Joyce. In a letter to his friend Ilse Jahr, Rilke asks (he is speaking of Christians): "Why, I ask you, if people want to help us, us who are often so helpless, why do they leave us in the lurch at the roots of all experience? Anyone who assisted us *there* could be confident we would demand nothing more of him. For the assistance he would infuse into us would grow of itself with our life and would become greater and stronger simultaneously with it. And would never go out. Why do they not set us into our deepest mystery?"

Rilke, of course, wrote as an outsider to the Christian experience, but it can hardly be stated that dissatisfaction is confined to outsiders. There is a widespread feeling among Catholics today that in the area of experience in which they are most deeply committed as persons and most vulnerable, that of sexual relations, the Church has left them in the lurch or, worse, led them into a bog. Of overwhelming importance though they are in themselves, the questions of birth control and clerical celibacy, covered over with a discreet silence in the Council documents, are perhaps even more important as symptoms of the need for a radical rethinking in this area. But who will do the rethinking? It was left to a good old Oriental patriarch on the Council floor to make the obvious point that it is those who, presumably, have no sexual experience who are legislating on sexual conduct for those who have. Where can we find help for this task?

Traditionally, help has been sought and found in the Scriptures. But there we have the difficulty that the recorded words of Jesus and Paul are clearly inadequate as a code for sexual conduct or a basis for the positive assessment of erotic experience. There is, in particular, the eschatological perspective which we find difficult to share or even transpose into more meaningful categories. Eschatology has to do with the *direction* of existence, and we feel that it is inadequate simply to speak in eschato-

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logical or teleological terms without at the same time allowing for an analysis of human (that is, bodily) existence.

In particular, eschatology expressed in terms of anthropological dualism tends to leave out of account what Bonhoeffer calls the Right to Bodily Life. How is the idea of direction or purpose to be reconciled with the enjoyment of this right since, as Bonhoeffer again remarks (in the relevant chapter of his *Ethics*), it is inherent in the nature of joy to be spoiled by any thought of purpose? Maybe we shall get some help here from the Old Testament. This will certainly not be in the form of a biblical treatise on the erotic since the Bible, unlike the Kama Sutra, has no one line on sex. There is no word in Hebrew for "sex," which make discussions of the kind that flourish nowadays a bit difficult. But if we cannot elaborate a doctrine we can at least point to some positive approaches and at the same time dispel some common misunderstandings.

Old Testament Pointers

In the Wisdom writings, which are a reflection on and a diagnosis of human existence, the role of the erotic is frankly accepted. This is important since in common experience diagnosis is a first step to redemption. Qoheleth enjoins on his listener to "live joyously with the wife you love" and the author of Proverbs sees "the way of a man with a maiden" as the deepest mystery of all that he beholds. Sex is seen as a gift and procreation a command joyfully accepted. The Canticle may appear at first sight a rather embarrassing intrusion into the canon considering the surprising candor of the description of physical love which it contains. Originally composed as a song-cycle for a wedding which lasted a whole week as the Arab *wassf* still does, it is in the full sense of the term an erotic composition but celebrates *eros* not as impersonal and predatory but as *the* expression of mutuality (it is in dialogue-form) and self-transcendence. For the fully human love which it celebrates it claims the highest honors: "If a man offered for love all the wealth of his house it would be utterly scorned."

Both the potentiality and danger of sex form a basic motif of the earliest historical writings of the Old Testament, the Davidic Succession History in particular. Anyone reading this can hardly fail to be struck by the prominent role of the sexual. Without wasting time on what is morally irrelevant, such as David being warmed in his old age by the Shunamite maiden (it was probably a way of discovering whether the old king was still potent) or Solomon's harem of spectacular size (the harem was a royal status symbol), we should note the balanced and sober appraisal of *eros* in human relations. The same for the long patriarchal history in Genesis. The writer here deals plainly with the given facts of physical existence. He shows us these bedu sheiks as they really were, living with their full natural life undiminished by preoccupation with "saving one's soul" or living with a part of one's mind in a future life. Their psychic energies were not siphoned off, as ours often are, by desultory reading, spectator recreations or excess cerebration. Self-transcendence was focused on the union of the sexes, generation, bringing children into the world. There is, above all, a remarkable reticence in moral evaluation.

There are other ways than sexual union in which man and woman can give and transcend themselves, but the Old Testament puts this squarely in the center. Sexual mutuality is *the* means of inter-personalization. An inverse proof can be found in the fact that all forms of sexual perversion, including extreme forms such as sadism, require a depersonalized milieu in which to operate. It was therefore natural that it should become the image of the covenant-relationship between God and his people. It is only if we place it against the background of religious thinking at that time that we can gauge the revolutionary audacity of Hosea's representing the divine *agape* as *eros* and, moreover, in the light of his own marriage which had gone on the rocks. There is the at first sight equally surprising fact that the paradigm-myth which stands at the beginning of the Yahwist's work deals with a monogamous union though coming from a society which countenanced polygamy.

All ancient semitic civilizations thought of the erotic as somehow within the divine sphere—hence the taboos which surrounded sexual activity of any kind. After the settlement in the thirteenth century B.C. the Hebrews came increasingly in contact with a more ancient and sophisticated semitic culture in which the relations between sex and religion, rediscovered experimentally in our day, were in special evidence. This contact posed for them the theological problem of how the erotic was to be sacralized. The sight of the orgiastic rites practiced in Canaan evidently inspired in people who had recently graduated from a semi-nomadic status a mixture of revulsion and attraction. The revulsion can be documented in the legislation forbidding such things as cult-prostitution of either sex, transvestism and the like. The attraction can be documented in the actual course of the history, from which it can be seen what little effect the legislation had.

We know that the practices condemned in the legislation and the prophetic writings had the purpose, for the people taking part in them, of bringing sex within the sphere of the sacred. The fertility-drama followed a divine archetype, the cultic prostitutes mimed the part of the life-bestowing deity (they are called "holy ones" also in the Old Testament) and the whole thing had the object of promoting the immanent forces of life and procreation. The violent reaction against this way of sacralizing the erotic follows on the rejection of the idea of deity as an immanent life-force and of the purpose of "religion" as that of inserting man into the unchanging proc-

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esses of nature. The mutuality and self-giving in sexual relations were to reflect the self-giving of the covenant God already experienced before they entered the land. It was not to be (as it can easily become) a means of what Aldous Huxley called downward self-transcendence and ultimately depersonalization.

Man and Woman

The story of the Man, the Woman and the Snake which stands at the head of the Yahwist corpus is evidently offered as a prototype or paradigm of the man-woman relationship and the dangers which beset it. Man is here radically ordered to society and the society of woman in particular. As Plato in the *Symposium* tried to express something of the mystery of sexual attraction in the myth of the primitive hermaphrodite, so here the writer conveys it exquisitely in the myth of the ecstatic sleep during which the Woman is taken from somewhere near the Man's heart and presented to him as "a helper fit for him." It is interesting and, in a way, amusing, to see what Augustine makes of this phrase in his *De Genesi ad litteram*. At this point he asks: "If woman is not made for man as a help in bearing children, what sort of a help is she? If it was to work with him in tilling the land, there wasn't enough work for one let alone two! And even if he had needed help, surely a man would have been a lot better for that! The same goes for consolation when loneliness is a burden. How much more pleasant for life and conversation when two (male) friends dwell together than when man and woman dwell together?"

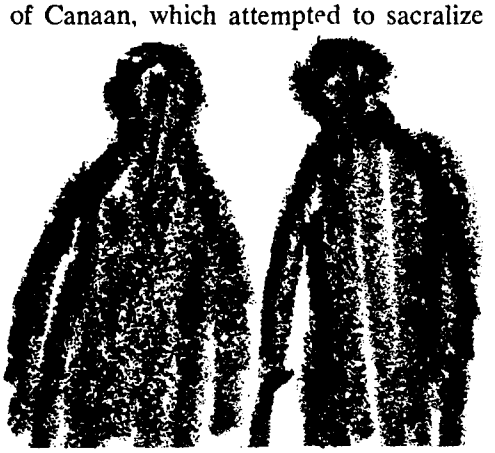
There is clearly no room here for sexual relations as an expression of mutuality and tenderness. It was, moreover, Augustine's conviction, expressed elsewhere, that all sexual activity is inseparable from concupiscence and that if man had not "fallen" some way would have been found other than sexual intercourse for filling up the number of the elect.

There is by now, fortunately, no need to press this. In fact we tend to get so snarled up on polemical issues that we easily miss the psychological depth beneath this apparently artless story. For the post-Freudian Christian the orgiastic religion of Canaan, symbolized by the Snake, would be a large-scale example of the incestuous link with the mother and therefore regressive. This link has to be broken before either individual or community can move forward on a line which goes, in Erich Fromm's way of putting it, from incest to freedom.

The sexual drive can either lead one backwards into an existence closed in on itself, a false autonomy, or be the means of moving forward to a genuine liberation and a deeper union with others. This is the test to which erotic experience always has to be subjected, and it goes some way beyond the demands of the situation ethicist who is generally more concerned with the individual than with the community.

In the Genesis story the individual element comes out in the subsequent impossibility of "being like God," that is, exercising genuine freedom. The Man ends up in much the same position as Gide's *Immoraliste* after the tragic death of Marceline. The community element, with which the writer is more concerned, is emphasized by making his action the first in a chain which progressively disrupt life in society, ending with the complete breakdown of communications in the story of the Tower of Babel.

An intelligent Christian reading of the Old Testament cannot fail, therefore, to bring out the positive role of the erotic as the appropriation of the right to bodily life, the truest expression of mutuality and the image of the divine self-giving. We could add that though the Old Testament does not have the myth of cosmogonic eros, the affirmation that man is made in the divine likeness clearly has something to do with his ability to create offspring "in his own likeness" (compare Gen.1,26 and 5,3). There is also the prophetic affirmation that Yahweh, not the fertility deity of Canaan, is the true *Spendergott*, the generous life-giver. Over against the naturalistic religion of Canaan, which attempted to sacralize homo-



sexual practice and even bestiality, the Hebrew affirms (implicitly) that man is the only animal who can make a free gift of sex in order to create a mutuality which is at the root of community. There is, finally, the affirmation of the humanity and creative role of woman, going beyond anything which the sociological and cultural position of women at that time warranted.

It seems a pity that so little of this has gone into Christian thinking and that where the Old Testament has been used in this area it has generally been to inhibit or deter. So, for example, the scholastics found arguments in the Old Testament in favor of clerical celibacy which no scholar of repute would care to endorse today. Then there is the use made of the story of Onan son of Judah who avoided doing his duty as *levir* (brother-in-law) by a means which has won him a dubious fame in the textbooks of moral theology. We are told that he "did what was displeasing to the Lord" (Jerome has, typically, "he did a detestable thing"!) and the whole context indicates that "what he did" refers to his refusal of social responsibility as then conceived, with special reference to the

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malice he evidently bore his dead brother. Havelock Ellis charged the Church with responsibility for the savage repressive measures taken against the homosexual, and it is at least true that policies pursued in this matter by Christian legislatures have been determined with reference to certain well-known biblical texts. The death penalty for homosexual practice, abolished as recently as 1861 in England, passed into European civil codes from that of Justinian (who thought that homosexuality was the cause of earthquakes) and was imposed with the Old Testament death penalty in mind.

There is, of course, more than a hint in the Old Testament of the demonic character of *eros*. The author of Proverbs refers to this when he asks: "Can a man carry fire in his bosom/and his clothes not be burned?/Can a man walk on hot coals/and his feet not be scorched?"

Rules and Covenant

The erotic is circumscribed not by rules but by the covenant-relationship which was seen as a gift leading to a full life and away from a false and ultimately stultifying autonomy. Here again, there have been misunderstandings. It has been common practice to subsume all teaching on sexual ethics under the sixth and ninth commandments. Fair enough, but we have to be careful to understand where the real emphasis is here. The prohibition of adultery is aimed at social injustice in the first place, as can be seen in the fact that it is sandwiched in between murder and stealing. Elsewhere the death penalty is prescribed for both parties in adultery. There is also the death penalty for the rape of a girl solemnly promised in marriage, but for the rape of a woman neither married nor betrothed there is only the penalty of having to marry the wronged party without further option.

The prohibition in the ninth commandment is against laying hands on the *property* of one's neighbor. It is a law aimed at protecting private property itemized as house, wife, cattle, servants. The evident divergence between this patriarchal and proprietary view of marriage and that prevailing today of marriage as a partnership makes it impossible to take these prescriptions out of their context and apply them today—and if we do we may as well go the whole hog and set up a theocracy like that of Calvin at Geneva. Jesus himself went behind the legislative codes and simply affirmed the sacrality of the primordial union between man and woman. Paul takes up genuine Old Testament prophetic thinking and sees this as the reflection of the divine covenantal self-giving and therefore as "a great mystery" (Eph. 5:32). To our great loss, we have here as elsewhere snatched at the legal and neglected the prophetic.

Perhaps no one has stated the main criticism of the "standard" Christian teaching on the erotic as succinctly and pointedly as the non-Christian Alex Comfort. In his *Sex and Society* he writes: "The traditional view of Christian civilizations has been that all forms of sexual activity are by nature suspect, and that only those that make up a bare minimum, necessary for the purposes of reproduction, are permissible."

It is hardly any use arguing that this is not the scriptural and therefore cannot be the Christian attitude to sexual experience. The fact is that it has become so, either through influences of the kind which lie behind Augustine's teaching, an illustration of which was given above, or through an unconscious misrepresentation of biblical teaching. With regard to this latter we should recall that one of the most formative influences on thinking in the Western Church has been the Vulgate. Until quite recently this was the only version, either in the original or in translations such as Douai or Knox, to which Roman Catholics had free access. As all know, the Vulgate was the *chef d'oeuvre* of Jerome, a great man in many ways but one whose attitude to woman and sex was demonstrably pathological.

Take his translation of *Judith*. Catholics now accept this as canonical Scripture but it appears Jerome did not. In fact he tells us that he lost little time in translating it, dedicating to the job "just a little head-scratching." The tenth chapter of this book describes the heroine's seduction of Holophernes. Anyone acquainted with Jerome's views on female adornment will not be surprised to learn that he introduced into this passage some modifications of his own. The best Greek versions tell us that she bathed, perfumed herself, had a hair-set, wrapped a turban round her head (Douai has "a bonnet") and put on her best jewelry; "she made herself as beautiful as possible in order to capture the looks of the men who should see her." In place of this last phrase Jerome has: "the Lord also gave her more beauty because all this dressing up did not proceed from sensuality but from virtue."

This is a small-scale censuring, as is that in *Esther* when she set out to win the heart of Xerxes, but symptomatic none the less. The case is different with *Tobit*. The hero of this pious tale, it will be remembered, was due to marry Sarah but it transpired that seven former prospective husbands had met a mysterious death in the bridal chamber before being able to consummate the union. Tobias was, therefore, naturally somewhat apprehensive but by following the rather odd prescriptions of his traveling-companion he succeeded where the others had failed. The most important item of advice was to rise from the marriage bed and pray with her before consummating their union. This he does in the Greek text and lives happily ever after. When, however, we turn to the Vulgate, we are surprised to find the advice considerably amplified. Raphael says: "For they who in such manner receive matrimony as to shut out God from themselves and their mind and give themselves up to their lust as the horse and the mule which have not understanding—over these the demon has power. But when you shall take

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her, go into your room and for three days keep yourself continent from her and give yourself to nothing else but prayers with her . . . and when the third night is past you shall take the virgin with the fear of the Lord, moved rather by love of children than by lust."

We note here the complete disjunction between procreation and lust and the refusal to believe that the irrational and even demonic force at the center of sexual union can in any way be integrated into the divine plan. This is of course consonant with Jerome's views expressed elsewhere, as for example, that the only good thing that can be said of marriage is that it produces virgins. The influence of this kind of thinking was not restricted to those curious exorcisms of the bridal bed and chamber carried out in the Middle Ages; it has played a role in ways more or less subtle in the formation of attitudes. Some of these we are only just beginning to overcome.

For all its priests, wise men and prophets the Old Testament world is often violent, tumultuous and even brutal. But the sacrality of the center of man's effective life, his bodily existence, is always affirmed and its primacy jealously guarded. To contemplate this fact is already in itself a form of release for us in the Western Christian tradition who have inherited such a heavy load of emotional and sexual guilt. It is true that what is central for the Christian has to be the divine *agape* experienced in the depths of his being; and that the Christian pattern of life through death means that friendship with God comes only through the fire of judgment on the old self. What, however, we have to believe at this juncture is that this does not imply that *eros* is relegated to the periphery, but that rather *eros* also is open to redemption.

T. ALAN BROUGHTON

WAKING TO DAY

The fog lifted at dawn
and far out in the bay
we saw one ship,
sails spread to the wind
that had not reached us yet.
It gave us something to watch
and carried us over that hour
when we were waking up
from separate nights.
Some dreams hang on the tongue,
deaden the eye that sees
dim as the unlit edge of the moon
the undercurrent of the mind
shifting below the day.
Riding at anchor through the night
waves pressed that boat
and made her tug the line.
What was it like
to weigh anchor at dawn,
see the fog melt
and wind rattle
the peaked canvas rising
hand over hand?
White sky, white sail, pale water,
she is finally tucked
behind the point,
leaving the bare gap
that darkens to the sky
turned blue.
Later the same wind reaches us,
roughing the water like fresh-turned soil,
flailing the air into slap and stir,
and only then do we wake
to the undivided day.

SISTER AGNES, C. S. J.

TIME IS A BONE IN THE SUN

(after the wind felled the chestnut tree)

A place in time is made
by the white shank-bone of the horse
lying low by the stone in the pasture grass
a beautiful emblem now
of the soul of an animal's speed
in the shape of its lines and curves
restraining the motion of change.
The horse of my girlhood's time
forever rides on this wind
in motionless miles of the mind
in the stillness of pastures past
grown clear as the white shank-bone
forever leaping the stone.

A place in time is made
in the clearing that gathers light
from the thin white stump
of the chestnut tree
the bone of the beautiful bole,
the shadowless, open grief
in the grass on the classic slope
where the absent blossoms sway
in the sun of the healing day.
A white scar shines in the air
where the dancing branches were.
It is stripped to its soul in the grass.
Stilled in time it becomes
an emotion inward grown
as sharp as the white shank-bone,
the motionless change in the horse,
the change in the tree's still force.

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NAPALM

"Children will suffer a disproportionately high mortality and morbidity . . ."

Napalm, an incendiary substance made by the gelation of gasoline, has assumed an important role in warfare since its invention by L. F. Fieser in 1942. Named for naphthenate and palmitate, two constituents of the gelling agent, napalm has unique physical properties that have led to the perfection of various incendiary weapons. . . .

The preparation of napalm is a simple procedure, utilizing inexpensive, abundantly available materials. A powder, consisting of the aluminum soaps of coconut acids, naphthenic acid and oleic acid, is added to gasoline in amounts varying from 5 to 12 per cent by weight, depending on the desired thickness of the gel. Gelation occurs in three to 20 minutes. No special technics are required for mixing; napalm gel can be made under field conditions with the use of vehicle gasoline. An improved gel, napalm-B, prepared by the combination of polystyrene, gasoline and benzene (in proportions of 2:1:1), is currently in production.

The gel produced by these simple methods, a cloudy, white, jellylike material, has unusual properties that make it an adaptable and effective incendiary agent. It is an extremely tough and stable substance, capable of withstanding the blast of an explosive charge without shattering. It will not thin out at 150°F. (operations in the tropics) or become brittle at —40°F. (the temperature reached at a bomb bay). It can be stored indefinitely and will not deteriorate during transport. The gel is adhesive while burning and will stick to metals and other repellent surfaces, and to ceilings, walls and moving objects.

Gel formation greatly enhances the destructive properties of burning gasoline by containing the flame and prolonging the burning time. Unmodified gasoline is an inferior incendiary agent because of its light weight, volatility and transient, flash flame. The temperature of a napalm flame will vary with environmental conditions, but can approach 2060°C.

Napalm has non-Newtonian properties; unlike that of most fluids, its viscosity varies with the rate of shear. With high shearing forces, as in the nozzle of a flame thrower, napalm assumes the low viscosity of a lubricating oil and can achieve a high initial velocity. When the shearing forces are released, at the nozzle tip, napalm recovers its gel form, and a continuous column or rope of flaming gel can be projected with speed and accuracy to a small target over 150 yards away. The range of early flame throwers, using Newtonian liquids, rarely exceeded 30 yards.

White phosphorus, used in the ignition systems of napalm bombs and land mines, complicates the control of napalm fires. At the time of ignition a TNT charge drives finely divided particles of white phosphorus into the gel; these particles burn spontaneously on contact with oxygen and will reignite when fire control agents disperse. Burning phosphorus also produces a dense, white smoke, which retards fire fighting and rescue operations.

Napalm has been used in incendiary bombs, fire bombs, land mines and flame throwers. Incendiary bombs, 6 to 500 pounds, penetrate structures and distribute napalm by explosive charge. Tactical fire bombs, or canisters, containing 165 gallons of napalm, are dropped from low-flying planes. One such bomb spreads napalm over approximately 2,500 square yards. Land mines, or booby traps, containing 5 to 55 gallons of napalm, are detonated by TNT charges that first raise the mine and then rupture the casing. Flame throwers, mechanized or manual, project a stream of napalm under pressure.

Napalm casualties are caused primarily by thermal injury and carbon monoxide poisoning. Napalm burns are likely to be deep and extensive. The adhesiveness, prolonged burning time and high burning temperature of napalm favor third-degree burns in all affected areas, with coagulation of muscle, fat and other deep tissues likely. Burns of this depth will probably result in severe scar contractures and deformities, especially when conditions make early skin grafting difficult.

Nephrotoxicity will be a serious complication, and the mortality will be high in proportion to the total body-surface area involved. A deep burn of only 10 per cent of the body may result in renal failure. Such burns may indicate primary amputation.

Napalm wounds contaminated with white phosphorus may continue smoldering long after the initial trauma. The phosphorus in napalm is finely divided and may lodge deep in the tissues. Adequate debridement of such contaminated wounds will be difficult at best, and under field conditions may be impossible.

The combined effects of wartime conditions and inadequate medical facilities will influence the course and management of napalm burns. Mortality from respiratory embarrassment, shock, fluid loss and sepsis will be high. Children will suffer a disproportionately high mortality and morbidity because of the special problems, acute and chronic, presented by the burned child. Pre-existing anemia, often present where parasitic infection and malnutrition are endemic, may necessitate both early and late blood transfusions after a napalm burn. Such measures are seldom available in the areas in which napalm is being used.

The above article, by Drs. Peter Reich and Victor Sidel, is reprinted with permission from The New England Journal of Medicine *(July 13, 1967). Dr. Reich is an instructor in psychiatry and Dr. Sidel an associate in medicine at Harvard Medical School.* Opposite page: *A mother and child burned by napalm in Vietnam.*

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Edward Rice/IMAGE

Napalm burns are often complicated by carbon monoxide poisoning. Toxic concentrations of carbon monoxide are commonly observed in confined areas during a napalm fire, but lethal levels have been reached in open areas as well. The possibility of carbon monoxide poisoning must be considered whenever unconsciousness occurs in the presence of napalm burns. Unburned persons may also succumb to carbon monoxide in the presence of burning napalm.

Panic is more likely to be observed among napalm victims than among those wounded by other agents. Seasoned troops, accustomed to bombardments with conventional agents, have been known to break from cover during a napalm attack. The fear of fire may lead to maladaptive reactions, such as irrational flight or immobilization, that increase vulnerability to serious injury. Panic may also favor cardiovascular collapse in the presence of severe burns.

Incendiary bombing is potentially as destructive as atomic warfare. Fire storms can be created by planned bombing patterns. The effects of a fire storm, with high-velocity winds, smoke, toxic gases and extreme heat, create the conditions for a medical disaster. Loss of life under such circumstances overshadows all other considerations. Saturation of Japanese cities with napalm during the last months of World War II caused many more deaths than the atomic attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Although burns will be a major cause of injury in fire bombing, many of the casualties will result from secondary effects not involving direct burn. These effects can also occur in napalm attacks on troop concentrations and villages.

Environmental temperatures rise to intolerable levels, and victims may succumb to heat stroke during attempts to escape from the area; rescue workers entering the area after incendiary raids may also suffer from heat stroke. Air-raid shelters become death traps from the combined effects of heat, anoxia and carbon monoxide. Hot winds and radiant heat have marked dehydrating effects, leading, in the extreme case, to the Bombenbrand-schrumpfleichen ("incendiary-bomb-shrunken bodies") seen in the fire storm in Hamburg.

Carbon monoxide poisoning becomes a major cause of death in large incendiary raids. . . . Shelters develop extremely high concentrations of carbon monoxide during incendiary raids and often cannot be entered after the fires have subsided. Concentrations of as much as 95 per cent have been found in the shelter dead.

The problems presented by casualties from incendiary raids may exceed the capability of facilities for medical care in modern, urban centers. In an underdeveloped country such casualties, even on a lesser scale, will present an almost hopeless problem. Patients with burns in particular may overtax the capacity of existing facilities in areas where medical care is in short supply.

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New wolf at Cambodia's door?

THE PRINCE AND US

D. GARETH PORTER

The renewed military demand for countermeasures against the use of Cambodia as a logistics and operations base by Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces has momentarily obscured the deeper crisis in American relations with Cambodia. For behind the question of what to do about this particular problem lies a far more serious question for American officials: Are Cambodia and its chief of State, Prince Norodom Sihanouk, fundamentally hostile or friendly to American purposes in South Vietnam?

The official American attitude in the past has been an ambivalent one. On one hand, Sihanouk's devotion to the interests and integrity of the Khmer kingdom of Cambodia is universally recognized, and his anti-Communism is admitted. Yet he has in the past several years bitterly condemned American policy in Vietnam while lending support to the enemy. In combination with his close public friendship with China, this has been enough to cause American officials to conclude that Sihanouk has moved his country into the Chinese communist camp.

The apparent inconsistency of these perceptions of Sihanouk have always been reconciled, however, by the assertion that he is supporting the Communist side merely because he must accommodate China. Thus, State Department officials explain patiently that Sihanouk fears being left to face Chinese Communism in Southeast Asia without the counterweight of American power, but he is certain that this will be the reality. In this way the State Department has explained away his steadfast opposition of the U.S. war effort as a political expedient made necessary by his belief in an American defeat and withdrawal. Ironically, Sihanouk's criticism has been used to reinforce the notion that Vietnam is a test of our power and determination, and that both pro-Western and would-be "neutralist" nations can remain outside Peking's embrace only if the test is passed.

The explanation's attractiveness lies not only in its support for the strategic rationale of the war but in the prospect which it holds out for a more cooperative Cambodia. For the State Department has never reconciled itself to the humiliation of having its political, military and economic presence removed from Cambodia. The U.S. military and economic aid programs, which had been proclaimed by Assistant Secretary Hilsman in 1963 to be absolutely vital to the whole U.S. position in Southeast Asia, were discontinued by Sihanouk before the end of the year. After cutting off diplomatic relations with the U.S. in May, 1965, the Prince offered Secretary Rusk a Consulate-General in Phom Penh, but this was dismissed as adding insult to injury. It offended national prestige and also official pride to be so unceremoniously dismissed from Cambodia.

When I talked with an official in the Far Eastern Bureau shortly after Sihanouk severed diplomatic relations, he made clear to me the American determination to regain its former position. Sihanouk had already gone a long way in the direction of Peking, he explained, but a success in Vietnam would make him change. The American interpretation and expectations, however, have been based on something less than a half-truth. It is true that Sihanouk has sought to use the antagonism between the U.S. and China in protecting his own security. But the essence of his foreign policy is lost when his desire for American territorial guarantees is confused with an imagined desire for an American military presence in Vietnam and his closeness to China is likened to the vassal relationship of the ancient Chinese sphere of influence.

Traditional Enemies

The primary fact of Sihanouk's foreign policy, as the State Department is well aware, is his fear, not of China, but of Vietnam and Thailand, both of whom have in the past carved out chunks of Khmer territory. The reason for Sihanouk's close relations with China is not a fear of Chinese aggression but rather his preoccupation with these traditional enemies.

Sihanouk has sought and received Peking's public and private assurances that China will support Cambodian territorial integrity—based on her present borders—regardless of who threatens it. Sihanouk was able to use the hostile American presence in both Thailand and South Vietnam in order to obtain this Chinese guarantee. But he has been no more trustful of the North Vietnamese Communists than of the South Vietnamese clients of the U.S. And so he sought and received from Chinese Foreign Minister Chou En-lai, even as early as 1955, the promise that China would put a stop to any further Viet Minh activities directed against Cambodia.

It was precisely this kind of guarantee that Sihanouk

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has consistently sought from the United States as well. He has insisted that the U.S. agree not only to protect Cambodia from the Communist Vietnamese but also from the anti-Communist Vietnamese and Thai governments, which have been the source of the immediate threats to Sihanouk and Cambodia in recent years. The United States, for its part, has consistently refused to participate in any guarantee of his present borders, out of deference to its anti-Communist allies. (Thailand once threatened to withdraw from SEATO if the U.S. attended a conference on guarantees of Cambodia's neutrality.) Sihanouk is thus reflecting not only geographical realities but the unwillingness of the U.S. to guarantee his borders when he regards China as a more reliable friend than the U.S.

In the two and a half years since the rupture of diplomatic relations with the U.S., Sihanouk has tried to use the resumption of relations as an inducement for an American pledge to respect and guarantee his borders, but U.S. officials seem only able to think about how they will prove their status as an Asian power to Sihanouk by a smashing victory in Vietnam. The State Department has been watching anxiously for the slightest sign that Sihanouk is ready to retreat from his support of the Viet Cong and begin supporting the U.S. But Sihanouk statements on the war forced Assistant Secretary William Bundy to admit in 1966 that Cambodia had become, if anything, "somewhat more unfriendly." Nevertheless Bundy held to his Department's interpretation that Cambodian-U.S. relations would improve when it was demonstrated to the Prince that the U.S. would not be defeated. He asserted that U.S. aid programs, which had provided "intangible benefits" in the form of "personal contacts with people," would bear fruit in U.S. relations with Cambodia only when, in Sihanouk's mind, "the tide turns in Vietnam."

In April, 1967, after Sihanouk attacked Cambodian Communists who had resorted to violence in Battambang Province, American journalists could not resist speculating that the Prince was finally responding to American military success in South Vietnam. Sihanouk fired off one of his many "letters to the editor," pointing out to the *Christian Science Monitor* that in order to suppress internal rebels, he did not need to "seek encouragement from so-called American 'successes' in Vietnam or from internal dissensions in China."

Again the pattern was repeated in September, when Sihanouk moved swiftly and decisively against Chinese students in Cambodia, pro-Peking newspapers and cabinet ministers and the Peking-sponsored Khmer-Chinese Friendship Association (which he replaced with one of his own). And when Peking sent a message of encouragement to the outlawed association, Sihanouk warned her about interfering in Cambodian affairs, forcing China to back down.

The American response was predictable. The New York *Times* reported that U.S. officials viewed Sihanouk's measures as signifying a movement away from Peking and toward the United States. While admitting that the causes of Sihanouk's moves were partly internal, they also believed that Sihanouk was now finally reassessing the Vietnam conflict and his earlier prediction of an American defeat. As a result, according to the official analysis, he felt free to "say uncomplimentary things about Communist China and to mute his criticism of the United States." *Newsweek,* following the official line, concluded that Sihanouk had "apparently decided the U.S. is going to maintain a physical presence in Southeast Asia for quite a while."

The Prince once again made clear the absurdity of these explanations for his behavior, when he pointed out during Mrs. Kennedy's visit on Nov. 4 that the resumption of diplomatic relations did not depend on anything except an American willingness to recognize formally Cambodia's territorial integrity and to pledge no further violation of her borders. He asserted his opposition to the American war and his support for the National Liberation Front and North Vietnam would continue.

One of the tragedies attending the Vietnamese adventure is the distortion of reality by the security bureaucracy in order to fit into the general rationalization of the war. If American officials could only remove the blinders imposed by their need for justification, they would see that Sihanouk's aversion to the American war in Vietnam is not caused by this nation's poor reputation for belligerence in Asia, nor is it susceptible to military solution.

For Sihanouk has come to regard the war not only as a danger to his territorial integrity but also as an unjustified and unnecessary imperial venture. To those who genuinely feel that the U.S. would be forever discredited in his eyes by withdrawal, Sihanouk said earlier this year, "As an Asian . . . . . I know there would be no loss of face in their withdrawal from Vietnam. There is loss of face only in the continuation of their criminal policy."

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LARRY RUBIN

THE VITALIST

So many dead things move. The very air
Dances with a life beyond the limits
We have set to things possessed of breath.
The winds have mastered motion: every drop
Of ocean spray, particles of rain,
Of dust and sand blown into our lungs,
Blinding us with inorganic flakes
Of earth, reveal an endless animation
Driving toward the furthest stars, that spiral
Past the telescopic curve of light.
Petals in the wind, the palsied leaves,
The secret tensions in the structured snow
Move across our dreams, awake the atoms
Sifting through the stillness in our bones.

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THE STAGE

Say what you will against Edward Albee's *The Zoo Story* and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*—and, like me, you can surely say plenty—they remain two of the best plays written in America. It is, therefore, sad to see what has been happening to Albee since, and nothing, not even the instant coffining of *Malcolm*, was as disheartening as the current *Everything in the Garden*, regardless of whether it runs or vanishes into the thin air that it already so closely resembles.

Everything in the Garden is a 1962 play by the English dramatist Giles Cooper, which Albee was to change only minimally so as to transpose it to America, but which he proceeded to rewrite extensively—though not nearly so extensively as he has since claimed. That Cooper recently died is a misfortune not only for him but also for Albee, whose adaptation thus changes from simple rape to an act of necrophilia. And Albee makes matters worse by patronizing Cooper, whose play is considerably better than this parasitic paraphrase. In an article in the *Times* Albee owned that he was "terribly proud" of Cooper—presumably for having provided him with a rough draft for his master recension. At times, terrible pride could be better described as infernal cheek.

Cooper's play was a smooth and cool contribution to the absurdist theatre. A struggling suburban middle-class couple, particularly concerned with keeping up their garden and appearances, become suddenly rich; it turns out that the wife has been lucratively selling herself in a London house of assignation. Her husband is about to throw her out, when guests arrive, and it emerges that all the wives in the group work for the same outfit with their husbands' approval. So our husband acquiesces, and when an unmarried bibulous friend stumbles on the guilty secret, he ends up buried in the garden, which now, besides other expensive improvements, can boast human fertilizer.

The English play, no masterpiece by a long shot, nevertheless scores by keeping a surface of almost unruffled hypocrisy: a stiff upper lip while lower organs, including the heart, indulge in most un-British activities. With impeccable understatement, this society is shown consuming its pot of honey—or gold—on the grave of the last remaining decencies. But Albee cannot leave it at that: he has to hype up the comic parts into his well-known bitchy barb-tossing contests, and the grim ones into shrill, self-righteous hysteria. Thus where in Cooper's play the bachelor, Jack, says of the wife, Jenny, "Isn't she beautiful?" in Albee he comments, "I find Jenny so attractive—not that I am going to jump her." Or where Cooper uses the word "madam," Albee gives us a drooling "prostitootsie." And he blithely writes in scenes of sneaky nastiness among spouses, where the original has only anger, or nothing at all. Then, to lend his play a truly high tone, he inflates the character of Jack into a part-time narrator-*raisonneur*, who addresses the audience with choice inanities, often no more than the repetition of the line just spoken by himself or another character, only now in a faggoty drawl and with a sarcastic leer.

Albee particularly fanaticizes the antisemitic and anti-Negro attitudes of this country-club set, thereby turning the sociological clock back some dozen years and the dramatic one at least a score, all in the interest of up-to-dateness. For the trouble with Albee is that he desperately wants to be daring but lacks one required ingredient: courage. Thus he changes the character of the madam from a Jewish survivor of the concentration camps, hardened and cynical—a character who on Broadway, with its vast Jewish clientele, would have required audacity—into a slick, affluent Englishwoman, almost a Tiny Alice, and a perfectly uncontroversial target. Again, he wants to heighten the viciousness of Jack's death; in the original, this was caused by his being inadvertently hit too hard with a bottle. Now we have the whole group smothering him, Desdemona-like, with a pillow, until his breath stops, which any child knows means death—nevertheless, the group then tries sheepishly to revive him. So Albee makes his characters into deliberate murderers while yet giving them a burst of posthumous goodwill that makes no sense whatever.

The play is ploddingly directed by Peter Glenville, and unhappily cast with men who suggest homosexuality and women who could never make a hundred dollars an hour as whores—only as actresses, the requirements of our stage being laxer than those of our stews. Still, Barry Nelson as the husband manages to squeeze some life out of his role (he must have practiced by squeezing blood out of stones), whereas Barbara Bel Geddes is only ridiculous as the wife. When the outrageously effete Jack of Robert Moore speaks of "jumping" the shapeless and dowdy Jenny of Miss Bel Geddes, Albee's play, for once, does reach the heights of the Absurd.

What possesses Albee to take a less than outstanding English play, remove its occasional funny lines and genuine restrained horror, and insert his own brashly unfunny nastinesses and screechy moral indignation, only to end up with an outstandingly bad play? "I wonder whether you can read into other breasts than your own?" George Meredith once wrote to Alice Meynell. Albee's case is the opposite: when it comes to reading his own breast, he proves totally illiterate. For what is going on here is projection. In his crudely vehement castigation of these characters' venality, whorishness, need to impress others at all costs, he is blindly lashing out against his own need for the limelight, for dazzling the Broadway theatre at any cost except courage, even if it means misadapting Carson McCullers, James Purdy, Truman Capote, or Giles Cooper. I realize that it is hard to come up constantly with

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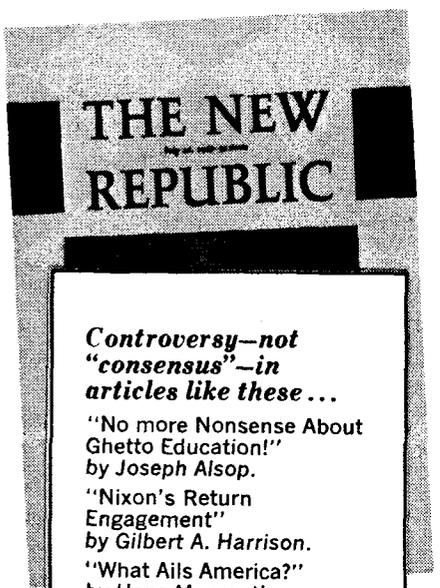

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new, original plays, but if Albee is allowed to adapt away unchecked, he will end up not only witless in himself, but the cause that witlessness is in a good many others. *(At the Plymouth)* JOHN SIMON

TEN BEST

THE SCREEN

Even T. S. Eliot would have granted that for movie reviewers, those in New York at least, December is the cruelest month. The studios and film distributors, anxious to get their tinsel and gems into release before the end of the year as Oscar possibilities, swamp the reviewers with previews; and by the year's end the critic is bushed. Then comes Ten-Best time—where we are now. Ten-Best lists have two advantages that make them well worth while: the reviewer must take stock of the *whole* year, and his readers on discovering his preferences get a pretty good idea of where he stands and what to expect of him in the future. So without further beguiling small talk, here are my Ten Best, some of which opened in late December and will be reviewed in this magazine soon. Except for the first one, the films are not in order of preference.

Persona. Ingmar Bergman's fascinating though complex film about personality and identity had first-rate performances by Bibi Andersson and Liv Ullmann in the lead roles and provided one of the most thoughtful movie experiences of the year.

In Cold Blood. Director-scriptwriter Richard Brooks has done a magnificent job in turning Truman Capote's nonfiction novel into a stunning crime-and-detection movie that has stirring human qualities as well as suspense.

The Family Way. Also warm and human is this English comedy, produced and directed by John and Roy Boulting, which is about a young couple, nicely played by Hayley Mills and Hywel Bennett, who have difficulty consummating their marriage. But the movie's main concern, although obliquely presented, is with the boy's parents, who are played to perfection by John Mills and Marjorie Rhodes.

Ulysses. While it would be practically impossible to bring James Joyce's great novel to the screen, director Joseph Strick has done it so well, with a good cast, imaginative cinema, and handsomely photographed Dublin (1967's not 1904's) that he deserves a special round of applause.

The Whisperers. Director-scriptwriter Bryan Forbes' moving and realistically-poetic portrait of old age was enhanced by the superb playing of Dame Edith Evans who, as the lonely, eccentric "lady," gave, in my opinion, the best performance of the year.

In the Heat of the Night. Although it failed as a crime-and-detection thriller, this extraordinary picture directed by Norman Jewison gave a memorable representation of racial prejudice in the deep South and was made memorable mainly by the outstanding performances of Rod Steiger as the arrogant white police chief and Sidney Poitier as the sophisticated and expert Negro detective from the North.

Accident. Josephy Losey's skillful direction, Harold Pinter's excellent screenplay, some lovely color photography, and a good cast throughout kept this involved *contretemps* at Oxford University fascinating from beginning to end.

The Jokers. Another of the bright, sparkling English movies in the youth cycle. Although its plot, about two brothers, well-played by Michael Crawford and Oliver Reed, who steal the crown jewels, was implausible, director Michael Winner made it move so fast and amusingly that the whole film became a delight.

The Stranger. Luchino Visconti's slow, careful direction of Albert Camus' story about the Frenchman, expertly played by Marcello Mastroianni, who's on trial in Algiers for the senseless murder of an Arab, won't win you to existentialism but it will win your admiration for first-rate film making.

Doctor Dolittle. In spite of its excessive length, this is the gayest of the year's musical pictures; kids as well as adults will get a great deal of pleasure as they watch Rex Harrison in the title role, Anthony Newley, and the rest of the good cast sing and go through their paces in this adventure comedy directed by Richard Fleischer and based on the much-loved stories by Hugh Lofting.

So stand the ten. I could easily have added "Bonnie and Clyde," for its imaginative film making and becoming the most controversial picture of the year, or "Gone With the Wind" for being the best and most popular re-release of the year, or "Goal!" for being the best sport movie, or "Far From the Madding Crowd" for its extraordinary beauty in telling the Hardy story, or several others. But ten's ten. And that's the way the game goes. You add whatever you want from your list. PHILIP T. HARTUNG

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BAGGOT STREET BARD

ETC.

The lot of the true poet is harsh: he lives in obscurity, dies in poverty; then everyone discusses his works and agrees on his genius. Patrick Kavanagh, who died in Dublin, on November 30, at the age of 62, is a good example. He was perhaps Ireland's greatest living poet, yet was little known outside his native shores. A recent issue of *Encounter* (the London-based highbrow magazine that the CIA is said to have subsidized) mixed him up with a lesser poet of the same name. It didn't surprise Kavanagh; he was never much considered by English critics, he wrote in a preface to a recent collection of his poems. And he did not exaggerate.

Yet Kavanagh deserved notice: he was a peasant poet in the Burns tradition, who lived for much of his life in an urban environment, specifically Dublin; he was a Catholic intellectual in the continental sense at a time when most Irish writers were critics of Church and clergy; he was anti-Establishment, anti-nationalist, anti-bourgeois, anti-humbug, anti-sham. He wrote once, a long time ago:

"By flinging ourselves prostrate before God and admitting our dire distress we may be admitted to a new dispensation. The best poets are those who lie prostrate before God."

He was a harsh critic of his fellow-writers. He sought sincerity in everything and that wasn't easy to find, he admitted, because it took "courage, intelligence, and integrity." He called the Irish poet F. R. Higgins a fraud because he based his work on the "myth and illusion" of Ireland. Higgins was a Protestant and according to Kavanagh it was not possible "to bypass Rome" to get "to the heart of Ireland." Yeats succeeded because he was himself, he was sincere; "O'Casey turned Communist which is the real Protestantism of our time"; and Joyce wrote "from the inside," even if he does seem blasphemous; but Higgins' "Irishness" was neither adult nor sincere, according to Kavanagh. He defended his cruelty to the memory of a good man on the grounds that such literary surgery is necessary.

Challenged on the thesis that an Irish Protestant could not be an Irish writer—a pretty difficult one to uphold—Kavanagh replied by asking: "Who wants to be an Irish writer?" Then he went on to explain what he meant:

"A man is what he is, and if there is some mystical quality in the Nation or the race it will ooze through his skin. Many Protestants, doubting that their Irishism would ooze, have put it on from the outside. National characteristics are superficial qualities and are not the stuff with which the poet deals. The subject matter of the poet is the Universal and in this he is one with Catholicism. By a peculiar paradox the pursuit of the Universal and fundamental produces the most exciting local color as well. In desiring to be 'Irish' a man is pursuing the non-essential local color. 'Seek first the Kingdom of God and its justice and all things will be added.'

"That Protestants can have the authentic local coloration is proved by such names as Standish O'Grady, Dunsany, O'Casey. But they didn't consciously desire this."

Perhaps Kavanagh's bellicosity on this Catholic-Protestant subject—something that hardly bothers other Irish writers except when it impinges on politics—stemmed from his background. He grew up on a small farm in the Ulster county of Monaghan. His father was a shoemaker. Patrick quit school at an early age to work on the family holding. He published his first poem at 18 in the *Irish Statesman*, then edited by AE (George Russell), and his first book of poems at 31 while still tilling the stony fields of Monaghan. He went to London and in three months wrote *The Green Fool*; "a stage Irish autobiography," he called it later. But it made his name in Ireland. He started to write for Dublin newspapers. In 1942 his epic poem, *The Great Hunger*, appeared in Cyril Connolly's literary magazine, *Horizon*, causing a sensation in Ireland where it was banned for "obscenity"—which was an obscene charge to make in the first place. Some competent critics see it as one of the great poems of the century, a grim recital of soul hunger in the Irish countryside. After *A Soul For Sale and Other Poems* in 1947, he published *Tarry Flynn*, probably the most authentic novel to come out of rural Ireland in our time. It was adapted for the stage and produced by the Abbey Theatre and was running in the Abbey's annex, the Peacock Theatre, when Kavanagh died.

He wrote little during the 1950's He published 16 issues of a magazine, *Kavanagh's Weekly*, with his brother Peter in 1952, and explained why in the first editorial:

"Thirty odd years ago the southern section of this country won what was called freedom, yet from that independence day there has been a decline in vitality throughout the country. It is possible that political liberty is a superficial thing and that it always produces the apotheosis of mediocrity. For 30 years thinking has been more and more looked upon as wickedness—in a quiet way, of course. All the mouthpieces of public opinion are controlled by men whose only qualification is their inability to think."

The theme of his writings was that men lacked "a central passion" because they had no fundamental belief in God. He attacked "the hysteria of nationalistic charlatanism." He bemoaned the fact that once he had a future. And he made a steadfast stand against what he called "Behanism," although I think he lacked his rival's broad humanity and charity, and was as much a legend in Dublin as Behan in his heyday.

Patrick Kavanagh lived in the south side of the city near the canal, a sort of Greenwich Village area of narrow streets and unconventional people with Baggot

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Commonweal in '68

For some idea of the range and pertinence of this outspoken national journal of opinion note the variety of subjects presented in this current issue, the competence of its contributors, the vigor of the letters from our readers, the readability and discernment manifest in its play, film and book reviews.

This issue itself is one way of intimating what Commonweal will provide for you today. Another is to cite the distinguished list of columnists who will be presenting their views in these pages during the coming year: Harvey Cox, author of the *Secular City*; Daniel Callahan; William V. Shannon, author of *The American Irish*, on the domestic political scene; Robert McAfee Brown, author of the *Spirit of Protestantism*; William Pfaff, co-author of *The New Politics*, on American foreign policy and world affairs; Michael Novak of Stanford, author of *The Open Church*.

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Street as its heart. He wrote a poem once about it that opened like this:

If ever you go to Dublin town
In a hundred years or so
Inquire for me in Baggot Street
And what I was like to know.
O he was a queer one
Fol dol the di do,
He was a queer one
I tell you.

My great-grandmother knew him well,
He asked her to come and call
On him in his flat and she giggled at the thought
Of a young girl's lovely fall.
O he was dangerous,
Fol dol the di do,
He was dangerous
I tell you.

On Pembroke Road look out for my ghost,
Disheveled with shoes untied,
Playing through the railings with little children
Whose children have long since died.
O he was a nice man
Fol dol the di do,
He was a nice man
I tell you.

Go into a pub and listen well
If my voice still echoes there,
Ask the men what their grandsire thought
And tell them to answer fair.
O he was eccentric,
Fol dol the di do,
He was eccentric I tell you.

And it ends thus:

He knew that posterity has no use
For anything but the soul,
The lines that speak the passionate heart,
The spirit that lives alone.
O he was a lone one,
Fol dol the di do
Yet he lived happily
I tell you.

Kavanagh said once that his memorial should be a seat by the canal near Baggot Street Bridge. He often contemplated the water from there. It would be a good spot for his ghost to ramble. And he deserves the honor. He honored Ireland by his work and despite his criticism never deserted her.

O he was a proud one
Fol dol the di do,
He was a proud one
I tell you.

SEAN CRONIN

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BOOKS

The Negro's inheritance: a culture of poverty

Talley's Corner
ELLIOT LIEBOW
Little, Brown, $5.95

SAUL MALOFF

The paradigmatic Negro Family, until then an impenetrable mystery to white America, became famous in the (celebrated or notorious) Moynihan Report. We now know that it is "female-based" or "female-centered," as the anthropologists grotesquely put it — a mother and her children subsisting after a fashion on woefully inadequate handouts in a household-of-sorts, which is sometimes occupied by another female as well, perhaps a grandmother or aunt. The welfare system—Aid to Dependent Children, in the stylish language of agencies—is predicated on the absence of the husband-father, the "able-bodied adult male," who is banished from the home by statute, under penalty of suspension of payments to "his" family; and to see that no co-habitation occurs (that is, to conduct sexual surveillance) is only one of the onerous tasks assigned to welfare bureaucrats. (In this context, both meanings of the absurd term "cohabitation" lend themselves to surprising and unpleasant puns. Is there, the layman wonders, raucous laughter in the rooms where social workers come and go?)

Yet an "adult male" is defined in the American ethos as the head of a household—that curious, archaic, Victorian, legalistic phrase. To be a man is to be nothing other than a husband and father: there is, precisely, no other acceptable way of being a man within the strict terms laid down by the culture. What are we to make, then, of the man of the Moynihan matriarchy? Where, in the first place, *is* he? Where does he hide when the Law obliges him to make himself invisible?

Down the block, likely as not—at the street corner, or any of the other fresh-air country clubs of the urban dispossessed: beer-joint or poolroom, candy emporium or hamburger shack, hot-dog castle or pizza palace. On Talley's corner, there is a carry-out food-shop, which serves the purpose adequately, if not grandly. The able-bodied adult males engage in the great and universal pastime of all social discards: hanging around. The corner on which Talley and

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his friends—the subjects of Elliot Liebow's sensitive and sympathetic study (the book was originally a doctoral dissertation written for Catholic University's Department of Anthropology)—loiter and fraternize in "effortless sociability" is in Washington, D.C.'s Negro ghetto, but it could be anywhere—in any American city where there are more Negroes than there are available jobs or fit places of human habitation (or jobs and fit places available to Negroes).

Ill-employed or unemployed, part-time or seasonally employed; fluid, transient, downward-mobile denizens of rooming houses or worse, existing in a limbo between the world of the derelict-bum and that of a family-based marginal worker, the members of "street-corner society"—being homeless, banished the length of a block that might as well be a frontier—act out the "illusion of friendship," create, in the absence of family, a "primary group" based on "male comradeship" in which "up-tight" friends agree to parlay trivial successes into gaudy triumphs and pretend by mutual consent that there are no mortal defeats.

But in the ghetto there is no possible escaping the "smell of failure": every American Negro is born with it in his nostrils. Failure is more than a fact of life; it is an inheritance, what anthropologists mean by that grimmest phrase: the "culture of poverty." Still, and in despite of which, a Negro, as we keep telling him, is an American too, subject as anyone else to the force of ethos. Like his white counterparts, he marries young, and he may even be so foolish as to hope for the best. He has, Liebow observes, "no special motive for getting married." On the margins of society, and underneath it, "sex is there for the taking" (when there's nothing else, there's that at least—and, as it turns out, at most); and "he can also live with a woman and have children." Nevertheless, contrary to all racist cant, he "wants to be publicly, legally married, to support a family and be head of it, because this is what it is to be man in our society." So, sensing doom deep in his bones, preceded by "models who have failed, convinced of his own worthlessness, illiterate and unskilled," but hoping against hope that *his* luck will change, be enters upon marriage and the job market.

And sooner rather than later, the roof caves in. The jobs, such as they are, *when* they are, are typically menial, arduous, degrading—not beginnings but ends, blind alleys without egress. (Try sometime to catch the eye of an able-bodied adult male whose lot in life is swinging a wet mop up one corridor and down another eight hours a day, day in and day out for all his born days—and then try to say, even to yourself: Well, at least it's honest work. An honest dollar for an honest job. Someone has to do it.) The possibility of supporting a family diminishes as the family itself increases. The last shreds of hope give way to sheer despair. A jobless man, or a debased, humiliated man working for boy's wages—a "castrated" man, as the young Negro militants, who are given to rhetorical flourishes, would say—cannot, by American definition, be the "man of the house."

Despair, turned inward where it festers poisonously, then bursts outward with murderous fury. Liebow, in his clear-eyed account of Negro experience, catches the pathos of the moment when hope dies finally. The man has nothing to give; but his family's needs and wants grow; and his wife's "demands mirror the man both as society says he should be and as he really is, enlarging his failure in both their eyes." This is the fatal moment. "Sometimes," Liebow writes, "he sits down and cries at the humiliation of it all. Sometimes he strikes out at her or at the children with his fists, perhaps to lay hollow claim to being the man of the house in the one way left open to him, or perhaps simply to inflict pain on this woman who bears witness to his failure as a husband and father and therefore as a man."

So he takes to the street corner, where his up-tight friends gladly lend him a sympathetic ear, because they've been there themselves. They will have a few beers, some manly laughs, curse whitey, strut a little, ogle the women passing by, talk vaguely about big deals, swap tall tales of heroic conquests. "From now on," he says, "I'm playing the field. I lived with her for five years and every day, as soon as I walked into the house, I'd hear nothing but nagging. Mostly money. I got tired of hearing all that shit." On the street corner, nobody will ever nag him.

Talley's friends hate you and me, and they'd love to see us burn.

Rebellion in Newark

TOM HAYDEN

Vintage Books, $1.65

RALPH WHITEHEAD, JR.

For about two weeks last summer, New York City was flooded with thousands of copies of a make-it-yourself diagram of a Molotov cocktail. Printed on bright yellow paper, the sketch of the fire bomb was exact, a gasoline-filled bottle, a gas-soaked rag jammed into the bottleneck, about two inches of clothesline rigged as a fuse, and a mixture of soap and dirt packed into the bottle's base to make the flames cling like napalm. The diagram ran on the front sheet of an issue of *The New York Review of Books*. At least a half dozen newsstand operators in Manhattan said they sold out their copies in an afternoon.

The issue carried, as a special supplement, Tom Hayden's account of the violence in Newark. It was a long piece. Column after column stalked into the back pages, as Hayden set down events. His tone was matter-of-fact. Consequently, it became at times ironic, because word and event often seemed to mock each other in unintended flashes of truly black comedy. "Rebecca Brown, a 29-year-old nurse's aide, was cut nearly in half as she tried to rescue her 2-year-old child from the window. Hattie Gainer, an elderly 20-year resident of her neighborhood, was shot at her window in view of her three grandchildren. Eloise Spellman was shot through the neck in her Hayes apartment with three of her 11 children present."

Yet these dark flashes carry a critical part of the meaning of *Rebellion in*

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Newark. After four years and a pogrom in Newark, Hayden feels his book—the original article, an introduction and appendix added—must say at least two things about black people in the cities. But a third comment comes through, unintended, a lesson for the white man. Newark's black citizens are victims of deep-seated and murderous racism. This is Hayden's first point. Racism built the ghetto, set the match to it last July, and then sent in the cops to stamp out the fire—and the people. Police reaction to the uprising was a racist reaction, and confirmed the existence of a force that white men had for years denied.

Also, Hayden dismisses the conservatives' call for law and order, pointing out again that order can only follow justice. He rejects, too, the liberals' apparent tolerance of the race explosions. Hayden feels that the liberal reaction views black people as naughty children and hence is paternalistic. Rather, Hayden feels struggle is a form of self-expression. It is an act of will and self-determination, and can mark a turn in the history of a people. This is his second concern.

But Hayden also cuts through layers of white rationalization. For it's time white people began to think about the unthinkable—deliberate violence, outside the law, committed by blacks and whites just a few blocks away. Unless violence is understood, of course, it can be neither ended nor encouraged. Yet motions of law and order, or twinges of naive sentimentality, block or divert understanding. And rationalizing persists because white people cannot catch themselves at it.

Then Hayden writes about the murders in the street or the advantages of using guerrilla tactics to fight in housing projects and tenements. Because these events occasionally outrun Hayden's words, the first reaction to them can be a nervous one: this is sick, a joke, like the do-it-yourself Molotov cocktail. But it isn't a joke; the quick and easy response can be caught and set aside as just a dodge, another rationalization.

At a certain point, the unthinkable must be confronted. Perhaps, after people do the unthinkable, after they do it sporadically for three centuries and on a seasonal basis for the past four years —perhaps, after enough people actually perform the unthinkable, someone might be able simply to think about it.

God is a New Language

SEBASTIAN MOORE

Newman, $3.50

God-Talk

JOHN MACQUARRIE

Harper and Row, $6

DAVID BURRELL, C.S.C.

God is a New Language is a new kind of book. It cries to be experienced, not just read. It is newer by far than attempts to make something new by taking what is old and worn out by commercialization, turning it sideways, upside down or what not. It is new with the newness of the New Testament and fresh with freshness of one who dared break language apart, for he knows what it meant when it was originally cast.

Sebastian Moore knows: he read English with Dr. Leavis, probed metaphysics and theology with Lonergan, and edited a journal awhile. Through all this he came to know that it wasn't enough to know, though it was an immensely valuable asset. Something more was demanded by the very knowledge itself: that one do his own thing. And Dom Sebastian's proved to be serving in a central Liverpool parish.

Here he has clearly confronted the fact of a Word so often spoken and not heard, and worked hard with words to recover that Word in a way that it must be heard. "Grace does not enable-to-work a system which, without it, does not work, the system being a constant in this transition. It breaks down the system. And, paradoxically, in so doing it brings us closer to 'nature,' the nature that the system has to immobilize and bring under the control of will." Lest some might overlook the subtle theological grasp in a statement like this and take it for a simple shocker, a pop way of saying something new, there are ex-

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plicit guides to method which show the firm hand at work: "The statement 'God so loved the world that he sent his Son, etc.' is not a statement about someone called God. Rather it is giving *the meaning* of God and challenging the theologian to conceptualize this meaning so far as he may. It is describing the transforming encounter whose place is the Christian community, the encounter in which alone God is personally known, and to which we have ever to refer for the meaning of the proposition that God is personal."

Community is the locus for a more alive understanding, resurrection is the promise and the life we live now, but the way of appropriating that life will ever be the Cross. The Cross spells death, death to schemes of consolation: "it has not been revealed what we *shall* be." And the Cross confronts "this gay half-world of the half-alive, the not yet dead" with their half-dead selves, inviting them to really live, "fully alive and fully dead." "God is the excitement which life for these people does not have. . . . The Resurrection turns this world upside down. . . . I am absolutely convinced that there has to be such a renewal of the Christian consciousness and conscience as will make our present Christian outlook almost unrecognizable. . . ."

I have cited at random to reveal the flavor of a prose poetic and closely controlled. Only a practiced theological reader will detect how well controlled however, for the clean sophistication of these essays is skillfully woven into a fine texture of considerable substance. This is the singular contribution of this slim work to theology, and the struggle it embodies to understand in order to communicate suggests a new locus where theology might be undertaken with startling results, the central city parish. For if the language is new it is neither novel nor precious. It remains throughout direct and confronting, strangely like that of the New Testament today.

MacQuarrie's latest book is useful, extremely useful. More theological than James A. Martin's *New Dialogue between Philosophy and Theology*, the author actually undertakes some case studies in theological discourse. This is refreshing at a time when so much talk about talk often leaves us bereft of examples. The author also summarizes in his accustomed lucid manner different theologians' views on language, and presents a sophisticated triadic analysis of the way in which language works. The summaries, the language model, and the analysis of theological discourse (in this case Athanasius' *Incarnation of the Word of God*) all set the stage for a more philosophical synthesis of the elements of religious language: myth, symbol, analogy and paradox.

It is here—in the philosophical analysis—that MacQuarrie is found wanting. One feels that his very ability to summarize others' positions and to present syncretic positions works against his coming closely to grips with the semantic and metaphysical issues involved in the use of religious language. He has some useful things to say about the evocative dimension of religious language; he distinguishes nicely between subjective and existential uses, but with-al one does not feel so confident when he engages in analysis at close range.

Whatever the deficiencies here, however, the book has merits which outshine them. It is especially recommended for anyone who wishes to find his way around that region where theology, metaphysics and language must inevitably intertwine. The human presuppositions for discoursing in this area are well observed. However one does not feel that the final portion of MacQuarrie's summary statement has been vindicated from within: "If we are prepared to have this kind of openness and readiness to listen, then I think we

REVIEWERS

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IRVING MALIN is the author of *Jews and Americans* and *New American Gothic*.

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shall find the language of theology and faith convincing; and when, in more critical mood, we subject this language and discourse to such analyses and testings as we can devise, I believe it stands up and comes through with its truth claim unscathed."

Beardsley

STANLEY WEINTRAUB

Braziller, $6

CHARLES ALVA HOYT

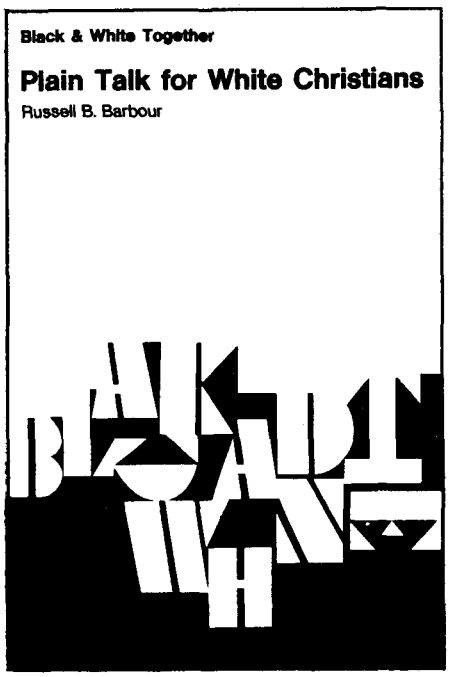
And so, in the age of the Happening, of Twiggy, of the Beatles, Aubrey Beardsley was unearthed, scarcely less wan than when he died of TB in 1898. Decadence calls to decadence, or so runs the argument, and our time is peculiarly receptive to the still audible voices of the '90s, brittle, affected—"I'm so affected, even my lungs are affected," Beardsley said—artificial and droll. "Weirdsley Daubery," they called him, and "Awfully Weirdly." He worked by candlelight, with the blinds closed in the daytime. He perfumed his flowers. He was the genius of the *Yellow Book*, that scourge of respectability, and *The Savoy*, still more dubious a publication, perhaps, if the character of its publisher, Smithers, was taken into account.

He was intimate, it was said, with dangerous, depraved men like Oscar Wilde (whom in fact he disliked and avoided), Ernest Dowson (whom he frequently despised) and Max Beerbohm (who does not seem so dangerous now). Aubrey Beardsley! Two weeks after his death, the New York *Times* wrote his valedictory: "He was at his very best when he produced women of the lowest type and men who were satyrs. Beardsley was incapable of creating anything belonging to a higher and a better art. . . . Already his work is well-nigh forgotten. . . ."

Since then we have had second thoughts. And we honor Aubrey Beardsley now, not because our age has finally become as depraved as his, but because he was a great artist. Recent publication of some long-subterranean works of the supposedly respectable mid-Victorian period should have cured us of the tendency to toss the word "decadent" about, one would think. Surely those elements in Beardsley's art which his own age found "decadent"—nudity, suggestions of irreligion, impudence and caricature as well as an inclination towards the grotesque ("If I am not grotesque I am nothing")—these would hardly titillate any schoolboy today. What does continue to fascinate the viewer of Beardsley's art is what R.A. Walker has called "the extreme chastity of his line." Indeed one might as well see in his new popularity a great sign of health in our age, another indication that public taste has turned from the discolored pond of late abstractionism to clean, clinical draughtsmanship (as revealed in Op and Pop?).

The reason that the last few years have seen an upsurge of interest in the figures of the '90s is that we have gotten far enough away from them to enjoy them properly. Probably the dominant emotion felt in our day for Oscar Wilde is sympathy. We have just now reached the point at which our greedy, tongue-lolling excursions into their private lives may be conducted by Ph.D.'s. After all, it was not so very long ago; Oscar Wilde has grandchildren who, if not still in their teens, are not far out of them. But the actual participants in the great events of the '90s are gone—although Max lingered late at table—and the professors are come in to clear away. And surely the best of these is Stanley Weintraub of Penn State. Mr. Weintraub possesses enormous knowledge of the period, which he has displayed in such books as *Private Shaw and Public Shaw*, a diverting, informative account of the relationship between G.B.S. and T. E. Lawrence, and *Reggie*, a biography of the delightful and almost forgotten Reginald Turner. He has also edited anthologies of both the *Yellow Book* and *The Savoy*. Now he has come forth with a biography of the very genius of the epoch, Aubrey Beardsley himself.

Fortunately for his readers, and thus for his subjects, Mr. Weintraub's erudition, although large, is nimble. His style is that best and rarest of academic styles, confident, good-humored, fun-



Recognizing that the passage of civil rights legislation on the one hand and the noisiness of black-power militants on the other have brought about many different changes in the life of the nation, the author (a white U.C.C. minister) challenges white Christians to reevaluate their own position toward the Negro revolution. He talks plainly and directly to the man in the local church, using his language and realistically facing up to his problems.

This book is especially valuable as a manual for congregations facing changes in their racial composition and seeking to understand the issues at the heart of Christian concern for racial justice.

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loving, agreeably opinionated. Unlike the scholarship formerly in fashion, it does not take refuge in pious disclaimers of partiality; nor does it drive its readers down the cobblestones like sheep. Instead it dawdles delightfully from anecdote to anecdote, ever ready to stop for the aside or confidential footnote. Of Beardsley's mother: "A Brighton beauty; Ellen Pitt—because of her extreme slenderness she was known locally as 'the bottomless Pitt'. . . ." A footnote from page 187: "As recently as August 10, 1966, reproductions of Beardsley's *Lysistrata* drawings—and more modest Beardsleys—in reproductions selling for two-and-a-half shillings (35¢) were seized by Scotland Yard detectives from a shop in Regent Street, less than two miles from the Victoria and Albert Museum, where the originals were on reverent display. . . ." If the professors continue to write after this fashion—as A.L. Rowse, Esmé Wingfield-Stratford, W.H. Lewis, Bruce Catton and others have done—we may yet see the death of that ancient, gaudy strumpet, the Popular Biography—but that is undoubtedly asking too much.

Among the many informative aspects of Mr. Weintraub's book is his documentation of the *literary* sources of most of Beardsley's artistic inspiration, as well as of his letters, conversation and small output of prose and poetry. Beardsley, an insatiate reader, wanted to shine as a writer; his works in this line, including the partially completed *Under The Hill*, a version of the Tristan-Isolde story, are carefully considered. It is useful also to know that Beardsley was a precocious musician: he played Chopin before he was old enough to enter school. And not many know, I think, that he became a Roman Catholic, although perhaps a shaky one, just before his death. There are illustrations, of course; 16 of them plus a portrait photograph as frontispiece; and appended at the back an appreciation of Beardsley's *Fifty Drawings* by Max Beerbohm. So the book, which began quite properly with Keats, ends with Max, for Aubrey Beardsley was a blend of them both: fantastical artificiality, witty brilliance, an absolute devotion to his art, early death and lasting glory.

Imaginary Friends

ALISON LURIE

Coward-McCann, $4.95

IRVING MALIN

Roger Zimmern and Thomas McMann, two ambitious sociologists, want to understand the nature of group conflict. They join the Truth Seekers, a cult which believes in extra-terrestrial "vibrations," to see how the various members respond to one another and to the "Varnians."

Verena, the "mad" teen-ager, is the apparent center of the group. She dresses in flowing robes, she lets Ro of Varna write obscure religious truths with (or through) her fingers. She interprets cosmic meanings so wisely that she "exerts control" over the Truth Seekers and the two sociologists, especially Roger who finds that he is "attracted" to her.

Miss Lurie is obviously using the confrontation of "science" and "superstition" to disturb our complacencies. By demonstrating the irrational impulses of the sociologists—Roger's lust for Verena (and vice versa); Tom's will to power —she suggests that they are as mad as the Truth Seekers. Instead of listening to Ro, they obey rationalistic deities and distort reality for their own ends. They are as "impure" as the non-organic food and clothing prohibited by the Varnians.

But Miss Lurie does not stop with these ironies. She wants to demonstrate that our "education" cannot enable us to cope with life. At one point she compares the Truth Seekers' meetings to university classes: "The whole thing got to be like a relentless parody of higher education. There was the same intense seriousness about a body of accumulating data which was, to say the least, unverifiable; the same assumption that here was a small group of enlightened, thinking persons who understood the universe correctly." She informs us that we accept knowledge on faith and relentlessly worship lies.

There is a "suspended" quality to this novel. The sociologists are *lifted* out of their educated patterns; they float in strange ways. They lose their identities as they submit unconsciously to the "vibrations." McMann, the formerly expert controller, finally believes that *he is Ro*. Or does he? Is he merely playing games? Such questions bother Roger (our "center of consciousness"), who cannot distinguish at the end between Truth and Untruth. After he visits McMann in the mental hospital he writes: "What if McMann were just role-play-

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ing at the end of our last interview? He seemed sane enough up to that point. What if he knows very well he isn't Ro of Varna, and was only trying to scare me: maybe because I didn't want to go into the hospital and work on his new project?" The novel ends with several evasions, questions, and ambiguities which hover in the air; reality itself becomes an imaginary friend (or enemy?).

Miss Lurie shrewdly employs the narration of Roger. We accept him immediately as an ambitious, intelligent, and *normal* observer. We listen to his Freudian readings of Verena and her subjects. We respond knowingly to his ironic views: "In my warm, unfinished glass of ginger ale bubbles still formed and rose slowly, like suns and planets in a miniature golden galaxy." By juxtaposing ginger ale and planets, Roger deflates cosmic meaning—Elsie, one of the Truth Seekers, has just been instructing him about Varna—and equates the high and the low. Because we are so accustomed to his enlightened ironies, we are especially disturbed when he no longer "connects"; and in the scene in which he waits for the Varnian landing, we wonder whether he (or Miss Lurie) has tricked us. He appears disconnected; his safe ironies give way to dangerous doubts.

Thus Miss Lurie balances the "deadpan" and the "mysterious." She compels Roger to move in his narration from one to the other so that we are swept along with him. This is not to imply that she (or her narrator) ever submits entirely to cracked, Varnian beliefs. She is still on Earth; she realizes, however, that the only knowledge that we can possess here is that life is mad, interesting, and entertaining. She teaches us finally that while engaging in "all material and spiritual activities," we should "*Stay Awake*, Keep Calm, and Beware of Flying Bats."

PROTESTANT VISIONS OF THE VIRGIN MARY—I am writing a book on the subject. Stories needed. Greatly appreciated. Also Catholic stories. BENNETT WM. PALMER, 15 S. Second St., Haines City, Fla. 33844.

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 427)

praisal of the Vietnam situation at the time of his death. Within a few weeks this trend was reversed; on Dec. 21 the New York *Times* reported that Secretary McNamara had reassured Saigon leaders that President Kennedy's plan to withdraw most U.S. forces from Vietnam by the end of 1965—implicit in a White House statement as early as Oct. 2—had been revised. ALICE ALT

Boycott Dow

Dinuba, Calif.

To the Editors: . . . On Monday morning, I walked into the utility room to begin the washing and staring me in the face was a can of "New" bathroom cleaner manufactured by Dow Chemical, makers of napalm. It repulsed me on sight in the context of the activities of Dow. There must be numerous others to be found out with a little research. Wouldn't this be an effective strategy to work out against such companies—a housewives' boycott of their "peacetime" products? . . . PEARL ZULIM

Disapproval

Dorchester, Mass.

To the Editors: Re/ "A Word to the Unwise" (Dec. 1):

Is it a threat?
Is it a promise?
(or)
Is it wishful thinking?

In either or all cases—*Tsk, Tsk.*

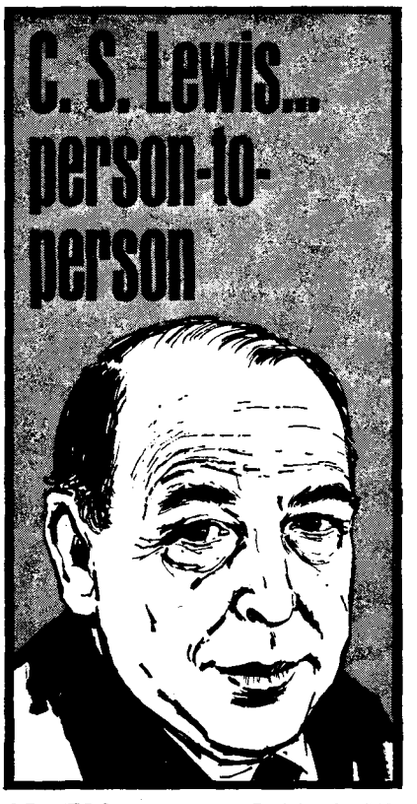
REV. J. J. VALENTI, S.J.

Approval

London, Ont.

To the Editors: Congratulations on the Jesus issue. It was excellent. Your editorial, "A Word to the Unwise" (Dec. 1), was also very good and needed. I hope it was read by many bishops. The gap between the People of God and the human community grows. . .

JOSEPH NEIMAN



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- 110,960 tons of napalm have been dropped over South Vietnam since the end of 1963.
- 150,000 acres of crop-producing land as well as 500,000 acres of jungle and brush have been defoliated by 5 million gallons of herbicide in 1967 alone.
- None of the 43 provincial hospitals is "considered up to minimum standards for a developing country in Southeast Asia," according to Sen. Edward Kennedy.
- Since 1961 more than 300,000 Vietnamese and American military personnel have been killed while a conservative estimate would place civilian death at approximately four times that figure.

(Above figures are taken from the U.S. Department of Defense and/or Senatorial hearings.)

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Join us in Washington, D.C. on February 5 & 6, 1968 to visit with congressmen in this "political" year, to meet by states to talk tactically about increased opposition to the Vietnamese war, and to make clear our concern for young men of draft age who in conscience cannot fight in Vietnam. Remember, the blood of the innocent cries forever. Should that blood stop to cry, humanity will cease to be.

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